A Voyage of Discovery

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A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

A Novel of American Society

BY

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TO

MY DEAR COMPANIONS

ON

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

I Dedicate these Pages

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

CHAPTER I

"WHY are you going to the United States?" asked an American, no longer in his first youth, of a young Englishwoman, on board the *Teutonic*, the second day after they had left Liverpool.

The sky was blue; the sea was smooth; the hour was noon. The lady was stretched on a deck-chair; the American sat beside her. Both were fine types of their races; both had faces which arrested and held the attention. Mr. Quintin Ferrars was unusually tall for an American; his limbs were not loosely knit, and his walk was erect and firm — attributes more common to the dwellers in the prairie than to those on Fifth Avenue. He had a resolute, thoughtful face, over which gleams of satire were more apt to play than those of sympathy; with keen eyes, the expression, even the color, of which it was difficult to determine. Neither in his accent nor in his colloquial-

isms was there any touch of the peculiarity which we call "American," but which our cousins affirm to be drawn through conduits of heredity from the undefiled well of English speech of their Puritan fathers. Mr. Ferrars was accused of being an Anglomaniac; it would be more true to say that he was keenly critical of the defects in his own country. But then he was critical of all things, human and divine.

The young Englishwoman, in her tight-fitting Ulster of russet tweed, with a stalking-cap of the same material, beneath which her abundant auburn hair was tightly rolled, was tall, and had a well-balanced figure, with a waist sufficiently large to support her breadth of shoulder and finely developed bust without suggesting a fear that it might snap in two. Her clear gray eyes, under dark, level brows, had a singular directness of outlook; the fine lines of her somewhat large mouth as much variety of expression, when speaking, as of strength and sweetness in repose. But the chief characteristic of her handsome face was the eager interest it displayed in anything, whether grave or gay, that moved her; the absence of self-consciousness in her intercourse with both men and women; and the bright smile, which was in itself an enchantment. She had great animation of manner, a frank and ringing laugh, and a ready

tongue ; all of which were probably calculated to mislead a stranger as to her real character.

"Why are you going to the United States, Miss Ballinger?" again asked Mr. Ferrars.

"The polite answer would be that I am going to see your country ; but that would not be quite true," answered the young lady, with a smile. "My brother wished me to come. I am doing so for the sake of being with him."

"You won't like it. Unless you go to the Far West, we have nothing to offer you that you haven't got better in Europe."

"People interest me more than things. One gets wrong ideas of Americans from those one often meets travelling. I shall like studying them on their own soil."

He lit a cigarette before he replied: "The best types you will probably not see. They do not push themselves prominently forward."

Miss Ballinger's eyes sparkled with amusement. "One would really think your object was to dissuade me from attempting to see your country."

"My object is to prevent your being disappointed. We are a very young, raw country. Youth, in the educational stage, is apt to offend against good taste. We are made up, at present, of odds and ends. You are sure to get hold of some odds. The ends require to be unravelled."

"I shall try and unravel them."

"Your brother is trying to do so now." He glanced down the row of deck-chairs to where Sir Mordaunt Ballinger sat on a stool beside the recumbent figure of a lady, so thickly veiled that it was impossible to see if she were young or old. "Have you made Mrs. Courtly's acquaintance? She is rather a complicated skein to unravel."

"We have exchanged a few words—just enough for me to know that she has a sweet voice and a very gracious manner."

"She is a charming woman, and a clever one. Not that she does anything or knows anything particularly well—at all events, much less than half our highly educated women. But she has that fine receptive capacity which makes her seize the scope and meaning of most things that do not demand preliminary study. Of course she is called 'superficial;' but what does that mean? That she has the artistic instinct unusually developed in a number of subjects, and an insatiable curiosity about everything."

"I had no idea she was that sort of person. I thought—I had been told that she was very fond of admiration—and—"

"I know all you heard. You need not tell me. She is often misunderstood; most of all, by her own sex. She is fond of dress, and dancing, and

admiration. She is religious, and philosophical, and pictorial, and poetical—what is she not?—in turn. But she is never ill-natured, never slanderous. A female Proteus."

"You evidently know her well?"

"I do, but we have always met in Europe. I have never visited her in New England, where she has a charming house, and entertains a great deal."

"Has she been long a widow—for I conclude she is one?"

"Her husband died several years since, and she has never yet made up her mind to change her state. She had one desperate love-affair long ago. Whether it is that has prevented her marrying again, or whether her experience of matrimony was not such as to make her desire to repeat the experiment"—his smile was not pleasant as he said that—"I do not know. I only know she is the best friend in the world, and that women are jealous of her because she attracts all sorts and conditions of men. The lion and the lamb lie down together on her hearth-rug. But she loves the lion better than the lamb."

"Mordaunt is not a lion—neither is he quite a lamb," laughed his sister.

"Oh! but he will be made a lion of in the States. The son of so eminent a man as your

father — whose name was so prominent in our country during the *Alabama* dispute, will be interviewed, and banqueted, and have receptions given for him, all the time. Most of this you will have to endure also. I hope you won't hate it as much as I should."

"I can't believe that you are right, Mr. Ferrars; but if greatness is thrust upon me in this unexpected manner, I hope I shall be amused. I have no idea of *expecting* to be bored with anything. A sense of humor carries one through so much; and I delight in American humor."

"If you expect that every one is going to talk like Mark Twain, you will be mistaken. You will find a good deal of unconscious humor occasionally in the sayings and doings of my countrymen. I hope it will carry you through those dreary hours, the ladies' luncheons, and all those terrible afflictions!"

"Must they be afflictions because you are not admitted to them?" laughed Miss Ballinger.

"Not necessarily. But the tall talk of superior women is bad enough when it has to bend to the level of our comprehension. What it must be when they are alone—"

"Well, they will have to bend to the level of mine. I shall collapse if they ask me, as Miss Lobb did this morning, 'what influence I consid-

ered the ancient religions of Egypt had on the manners and customs of the Western world?' I murmured, 'I suppose it has tended to a love of cats,' and fled."

Ferrars laughed, for the first time. "The old maid must have taken it as personal. I think, in some prior state of existence, she must have been a cat, though I doubt the Egyptians worshipping her."

"Her voice is very trying. Explain to me why your highly educated people who talk so much of 'culture' take so little trouble about training the voice? For the voice *can* be trained, you know."

"Certainly it can; and our singers prove that the American voice is a raw material that can be worked to advantage. But then singing pays, and speaking doesn't."

"Yet you are much given to 'orating!'" said Miss Ballinger, with a mischievous twitch of her lips. "Is not every American born to hold forth?"

"Well! As the Yankee said when he stood before Niagara for the first time, 'What hinders?' We are in the rapids of life. Why should the cataract of our impetuosity be checked? We have got to do a deal of talking to make leeway and overtake other nations."

"I think you have overtaken them. Are you a member of Congress?"

"Heaven forbid! What should I do there?"

"Serve your country, I suppose. You do not strike me as a good American, Mr. Ferrars."

"I am too good an American, and too irritable a man, to stand by and see all the jobbery and corruption that goes on, and not raise my voice. And what good would that do, even if I were elected, which I doubt? There are men shouting their lungs out all the time; there are papers, every day, denouncing the acts of a man like ——, and yet he will continue to be a member of our administration until he is hurled from power, and the opposition set up *their* gods in the temple. That is the result of our beautiful universal suffrage—what you are fast coming to."

"Are you a Democrat or a Republican?"

"Who can say what he is, in the present day? One feels disposed to vote with the opposition, whatever it is."

"Perhaps that is your principle through life," said Miss Ballinger, demurely, as she bound a Shetland veil round her face, which the wind was buffeting too roughly. After that he lost the sunlight, and the cloud-like shadows that crossed it. The next moment she continued, "You spoke of the papers just now. If they denounce corruption, they are not as bad as we are always told they are."

"Their denunciations lose all weight, because they vilify every one. The Angel Gabriel wouldn't be safe from their attacks. No man's home or his most private domestic concerns are sacred. No lie is too preposterous for them to invent; no scandal too hideous for them to propagate. As no man who brought an action for libel in the States ever got substantial redress, they carry on their vile trade with impunity—until some editor happens to be shot by an outraged husband, or father, when the community says, complacently, "Ah! served him right!" Can you wonder that the best citizens often shrink from the pillory of election for office, whether it be the municipal town council, or anything else? To have their early difficulties, their family griefs—it may be their family disgrace—their most secret wounds, torn open; to be pelted with the rotten eggs of vilification day after day—what man, unless he be made of adamant, or is sunk so low as to be absolutely indifferent to public opinion, would willingly subject himself to all this?"

"If a man had a very strong sense of public duty, and if his record were a clean one, I should think he would. How are things ever to be improved if all you educated men say this? By the bye, what *do* you do with your life, Mr. Ferrars? Something more than vibrate between Europe and America, I suppose?"

"Well, what I do can be done as well on one side of the Atlantic as the other. I was brought up to the study of medicine. But I gave that up when I was still young. Now I do nothing but write."

"Caustic criticism of your own country, I suppose? Anonymous?"

"Yes, anonymous."

"Perhaps you wrote 'Plutocracy,' the authorship of which excited so much curiosity, a few years ago?"

"I should not own it if I had," he replied, rather sharply. "I hold Sir Walter Scott's line of conduct quite justifiable in such cases. No secret could be kept if it was necessary to stand and deliver to the first highwayman who demanded your treasure."

"So you look on me as a highwayman?" laughed the young Englishwoman, merrily. "I assure you I had no desire to rob you of—"

"You misunderstand me," he interrupted, looking a little annoyed. "I did not think of applying the image—a stupid one, I admit—to you. As a matter of fact, I never write fiction. What I do write, for personal reasons, I do not put my name to; and, consequently, consider myself quite at liberty to repudiate."

The gong sounded for luncheon at this mo-

ment, and Sir Mordaunt rose and came up to his sister. He was a tall man, with rather too small a head for his height, but remarkably well built, and with that indefinable air of high breeding which is a gift of the gods, bestowed now and again upon the low-born, but not to be purchased nor transmitted; depending neither upon the traditions of Eton nor the tailoring of Poole or Johns. He had a frank, intelligent face, with indications of possible but transient explosion, in the quick flash of the eye, and occasional contraction of the brow. But he was more disposed to smile than to scowl through life. His laugh, and his way of speaking, strongly marked by what Americans call "the English accent," resembled his sister's; and there all likeness between them began and ended. Miss Ballinger's personality, to a close observer, conveyed a sense of reserved force under that light manner and readily responsive smile which her brother's entirely lacked. As some one expressed it, "all his goods were in his front shop-window." There was nothing to be explored, nothing to be connived at, in a nature affectionate, if not very profound; pleasure-loving, and, as some thought, conceited; quick-tempered, and, as some thought, occasionally impertinent; a nature every fold of which was exposed to the light that revealed its spots, and

the accretions of dust that are apt to gather upon goods that are exposed in front shop-windows.

"Come along to luncheon, Grace! I'm as hungry as a hunter. How do you get on with that Yankee? I hope he was as entertaining as my widow. She is perfectly charming. I want you to talk to her. She knows almost as much as you do about pictures and things—and she is awfully amusing."

"I have been listening to her praises from Mr. Ferrars, who, by the bye, is not a Yankee. He is a Southerner by birth, and a cosmopolitan by choice—an odd man, and clever; but I don't feel quite sure whether I like him. All the same, I wish his seat at meals was next me. Mr. Gunning, with his narrow little mind centred on himself, is such a bore."

"Mrs. Courtly tells me he is 'a dude,' and tremendously rich. They think no end of him in New York."

"I dare say; but, as his riches don't interest me, I wish I hadn't to sit next him three times a day for the next week. I had so much rather have that nice old man, Senator something, who looks like a portrait by Tintoret, with his white beard."

"What a queer girl you are! always cottoning to old men. Gunning is a good-looking chap;

talks a little too much about his yacht and his athletics, and his big game; but I don't think he's half a bad sort."

His sister smiled a subtle, enigmatical smile, and gently pinched her brother's arm, on which she leaned, as they walked along.

"How well I know you, Mordy! You wouldn't judge him so leniently if he were a penniless Englishman—'something in the city.' You are at present resolved to see everything American *en beau*."

"Of course I am. I only wish I had an American girl with some fun in her next me at table instead of that Lady Clydesdale."

"Well! She is American enough, in all conscience, with her republican ideas! She seems to me *plus royaliste que le roi*, if one can use such a conservative figure of speech about her."

"Only the fun's wanting. She is in such deadly earnest, with her rights and her wrongs, and her emancipation from social slavery, and all the rest of it."

They had reached the saloon by this time; and most of the famished passengers were already seated. Opposite Sir Mordaunt Ballinger and his sister sat a couple concerning whom Grace felt a mild curiosity. It had not been sufficiently strong to prompt her to speak hitherto; and they were so quiet and retiring, it was pretty certain they

would never take the initiative. Were they husband and wife? Hardly. The lady looked a little older than her companion. She had a sweet, tranquil face; and yet, for all its tranquillity, one read there the lines of suffering and sorrow. Her abundant brown hair was smoothly parted over a brow that was too large for beauty, without fringe or curl, to mitigate the defect in proportion. Her dress was of Puritanic simplicity. She wore no bracelet, or ornament of any description; but on her delicate small hand was a wedding-ring.

Her companion, without being ill-built, had the sort of figure which looks as if he had never been trained to athletics, and is unused to active exercise. His hands and feet were almost too small for his height. His chest was contracted; and he had a cough which, without being constant, made itself heard now and again. His smile was a very pleasant one, lighting up the entire face, as some smiles seem incapable of doing; and his rare laugh was merry as a boy's. He wore his clothes badly, and the clothes themselves were ill-made: facts which disqualified him in Sir Mordaunt Ballinger's estimation, but hardly affected his sister. What did affect her was the curiously intense, powerful young face which rose, beardless, above the loose-tied neck-cloth. It was too thin and colorless for manly beauty, though the lines were fine, and the

eyes of extraordinary depth. His voice, like his companion's, was low, and, except by certain expressions and the pronunciation of certain words, it would not have been apparent that he was American.

On the lady's right sat Mr. Ruggs, from Chicago, who had been to Europe to enlist sympathy for the World's Fair, and who held forth to Lady Clydesdale, opposite him, as to the wonders of the show, "which I tell you, ma'am, will knock the Paris Exhibition into a cocked hat!" His opulence and prodigality of illustration seemed a little oppressive to the gentlewoman beside him. Her companion had Miss Lobb on his left. That highly cultured lady tackled him at once upon the subject of undeveloped cosmic forces. Grace asked herself whether he would not be as glad to escape from the cosmic forces as she would be to forego the rapid vehemence of the young man from New York. And so, resolved that the stream of white cloth should divide her no longer from her opposite neighbors, she startled them with this original observation, addressed indifferently to both:

"How hungry being at sea makes one!"

The lady responded with a fluttering smile, "I have not experienced it as yet. I hope my son will do so soon. He has been sick."

Her son? Grace was astonished. And sick? Why, the twenty-four hours that had passed since leaving Liverpool had been absolutely calm. In her expressive countenance the young man read possibly what was passing in her mind.

"*You* would say 'ill,'" he observed, with a smile. "We use the word in the old Scriptural sense."

"Yes," said his mother, "'sick unto death.' He really was that. We have been quite a time in Europe, in consequence."

"Where were you?" asked Grace. "At some Baths?"

"Homburg is the only Bath worth going to," struck in Mr. Gunning. "Lots going on there, all the time."

"Horrid place. I hate it," said Miss Ballinger. Then, looking at her opposite neighbor, she continued, "I hope you were at a nice place. How long were you in Europe?"

"Four months. I was sent right off to Aix-la-Chapelle, after rheumatic fever, and then on to Spa. We had very little time to travel, but we did go around in Belgium and Holland for three weeks."

"One picks up awfully sweet delf and old oak in Holland," said Mr. Gunning.

"What! You saw nothing of England, then?

And this is your first visit to Europe?" Miss Ballinger looked almost indignant as she asked this. The mother answered, quickly:

"It is our first visit, and I never should have come but for my son's health. I should dearly love to visit the cathedral towns, and all the old historical castles in England, but I guess I never shall."

"Yes you will," said her son. "I mean to go next fall, and to take you with me.... My mother has lived more than twenty-five years in a New England village, without going further than the sea-shore. She enjoys travel, but fancies she cannot leave home."

"When one has gotten a house, and help, it's difficult to go right away, even if there were no other reason," said the mother, shaking her head. "But *you* can go. There's no call for *you* to spend your vacation at home."

"If one doesn't go to Europe," said Gunning, "the only place is Newport. You must come to Newport, Miss Ballinger—you really must. It's yachting, dancing, or picnics all the time. You should see how our swells live there. Why, Cowes isn't in it—it isn't really. Our prominent cottagers give such entertainments! Why, there was one luncheon party last year that cost—"

"Don't tell me, Mr. Gunning. It makes me feel that I am a pauper."

Miss Lobb here interposed to observe that it was only in effete old countries that pauperism was tolerated. She looked through her double glasses defiantly at Grace as she added, "With us it is exterminated."

Sir Mordaunt Ballinger's face was convulsed with suppressed laughter, as he touched his sister's elbow at this moment. "Listen to Mr. Ruggs's account of Chicago. If it doesn't make you wish to go there! Will you tell my sister what you were saying about your city?"

"I tell you, miss," said the fat little man, turning a pair of twinkling eyes on Grace, and with an expression so shrewd and humorous that she felt uncertain how far he was in earnest, how far endeavoring to impose on her credulity—"I tell you, miss, we are going to have the finest city in the whole creation. Don't you make a mistake. There will be nothing to touch it, until the New Jerusalem is built. Why, already it takes more than two hours to drive from one end of it to the other! We've got a street twelve miles long. We've got a tonsorial saloon paved with dollar-pieces, and a hotel of alabaster and gold. I tell you, miss, there is nothing to touch it in Europe!"

"And about the World's Fair, Mr. Ruggs? tell us what you propose doing?" asked Sir Mordaunt.

"Well, sir, we propose bringing over a few of

your European princes, and having them on show. We are in treaty for the Duke of Braganza, as direct descendant of Columbus, whose bones we feel like having—if we can—but, odd to say, they make some difficulties. The bones and the descendants will come right over in galleons made on the model of those that brought Columbus. We also propose to bring over the Sphinx—"

"What! From Egypt?" Miss Ballinger laughed outright. "Poor Sphinx! It will feel very strange away from its native desert."

"Oh, we'll blow a lot of sand up right around it. We've got plenty on the shore of our lake. That's for the classical advertisement. Then for the Scriptural one. I did think of having Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and dividing the water by hydraulic pressure; but making the waves red might create a sort of a—feeling—the citizens might feel kinder uncomfortable. There's no reason against the Garden of Eden—plenty of apple-trees, and snakes are common—there's only a little difficulty about Adam and Eve. However, I've no doubt we shall hit on something. People do like something Scriptural. There's Ammergau, now! That would do fust-rate, only those peasants wouldn't come."

"But you're going to have a bigger theatre than the world has ever seen, I suppose?"

"We have one, sir. And as to acting, have you seen our Clara Morris? I tell you, sir, there is nothing in creation like it! Why, when she weeps on the stage, it is enough to make an iron dog come down from a door-step and lick her hand! Don't talk to me of your Bernhardts and your Ristor-*eyes*—not but what we'll have them, too, just to show how superior the *reel* American article is!"

"And pictures? Are you going in for pictures?"

"I believe you, sir! Why, the pictures at the Paris Exhibition 'll be like a pack of playing-cards compared with ours. I calculate we'll have the biggest picture on show that has ever been seen. It's forty-two feet long. I've concluded to bid half-price for it when our show is over, and to present it to the city."

Here Lady Clydesdale, who was on the other side of Sir Mordaunt, struck in her oar, and a powerful one it was. She was what Mr. Ruggs styled "a fine female, but fleshy," and her arrogant assumption of humility was irritating to others besides the young baronet; perhaps to none more than to Americans.

"I am sorry to hear you say," she observed, quickly, and in a voice like a trumpet, "that you are going to imitate the follies of Europe, in at-

taching any importance or giving any prominence to princes. It is degrading to distinguish one individual above another, except for personal merit."

"Yours and mine are beyond question, Lady Clydesdale," laughed Ballinger, parenthetically. It was impertinent; but he was nettled. She turned and rent him.

"My principles and practice are too well known at home for me to argue with *you*, Sir Mordaunt. I would resign my coronet to-morrow. I would abolish all class distinctions. I would herd with the humblest, I would dine with my servants, and give them all the luxuries I enjoy myself—the piano, horses, carriages—they should live as I do, did the prejudice of society permit it. I expected to find it more enlightened in America than in England. I thought there was one country, at least, where all men were equal! I am disappointed."

What Mr. Ruggs's rejoinder was, for he did rejoin, and how the battle was fought, Miss Ballinger never heard; for Gunning, who had been listening to her ladyship's onslaught in amazement, here said in an undertone:

"Is she mad? Fancied we were all equal! Why, we are just as exclusive as ever we can be in New York. The Four Hundred shut their doors against every one who hasn't money, I can tell you."

"Ah! Brains count for nothing, I suppose?

"Nothing out of Wall Street. A man must work, of course, to make his pile—if he doesn't inherit one. I was an only child. Lucky, wasn't I? Never had to work."

"Those who have to work are the lucky ones, in my opinion."

He looked surprised, and shook his head.

"Couldn't have my yacht or my team—couldn't go off to shoot in the Rockies—couldn't do lots of things, if I had to work. Then, getting up early every morning. . . . Oh! it wouldn't suit me." After a minute's pause he went on: "You'll let me drive you in my team, one day? I'll get up a luncheon-party for you somewhere in the country. We'll have a band, and dance afterwards. We'll have a rare, good time."

"I shall do whatever my brother likes in New York. You must ask him. I shall have absolutely no will of my own. Will you give me those biscuits? . . . Thank you."

"We call them crackers. About your brother, I'll see that we have a lot of bright girls. There's Miss Planter. She is a belle; she will just suit him. She was made a lot of in London last season, I believe. She will have a million of dollars. Not bad, eh?"

"Bad, if she is to be married for the sake of

them. It is fortunate she is attractive. I am glad that I have only enough to keep body and soul alive. No one will marry *me* for my money!"

"Oh, well, it won't signify to you, having nothing—" He stopped short and smiled at her. Then, though the connection of ideas was not very clear, he went on: "I say, Miss Ballinger, this is the second time I have been to Europe, but I've never seen anything of English society. I have fooled around in Paris and London a bit, but I have a mind next year to take a place in England, and hunt. Do you think I should like it? They say English women don't take to American men. Is that so?"

"We know so few. Most of you are too absorbed in business to spend much time with us. But your women are very popular. My brother says they are so much easier to get on with than his own countrywomen."

"That's right enough. But are not we American men easy to get on with, as well?"

"Certainly—perhaps too easy, sometimes. But, having got on, the thing is to remain on. I have heard it complained sometimes that Americans lose ground by assurance. If you come to England, I dare say you will be made a great deal of, because you are a rich young man. But if you

want to be popular with any one besides manœuvring mammas, take my advice—never talk about your money, never presume upon it, in any way. The nicest people resent that. . . . I am going on deck ; it is so hot here."

She delivered herself of this little homily simply, almost laughingly, and rose, leaving the young man to his half-finished luncheon. The mother opposite, without waiting for her son, upon whom Miss Lobb had once again fastened her fangs, had risen from the table, and Miss Ballinger followed and joined her on deck.

CHAPTER II

"May I walk up and down with you?"

The gentle little woman smiled her assent.

"I was never more surprised than to hear you were the mother of the young man opposite me—you look like his eldest sister."

"I was married very young."

"Is he your only child?"

"The only one alive. I lost two younger. That is why I—why we are doubly anxious about him."

"Your husband is alive, then? What is he?"

It was only this young woman's great charm of manner which prevented her curiosity sometimes from seeming obtrusive. But there was such genuine interest in the look of her clear, truthful eyes that no one, least of all the gentle, unsophisticated creature she addressed, could resent it.

"My husband is a minister; our name is Barham. We live in a very quiet village in New England, and seldom leave it. Of course, I should not have gone abroad with Saul, had it not been

for his health. But my husband urged it, and so I went."

"And you are glad you went, I am sure. As you were anxious about your son, it must have been a great comfort to you to be with him. Has he always been delicate?"

"Well, he has never been very strong." Here she sighed. "We feared lung trouble at one time. Our climate is rather trying, and Saul overworked himself."

"Was he at Harvard University? I am sure he is very clever."

"Yes, he is very clever. When he left Harvard he became a teacher. Then they made him a professor at the university a few months ago—a great compliment to so young a man. But whether his health will stand it—" Here she sighed again, and left her sentence unfinished.

"But he is going now to return to his work?"

"Why, certainly! He would not give that up for the world. He was offered a fine salary to remain in Europe and travel with two boys. It would have been a grand thing for his health, and he would have made more money than he can do at home, but he would not accept it. He has a deal of ambition, you see; and there's—there's something else. He is so fond of me, he couldn't bear to leave me, and go right away. Here he

comes; don't say anything to him about his health, Miss—"

"Miss Ballinger. No, I will not. I am so much obliged to you for telling me so much about yourselves. . . . Mr. Barham, I am going to introduce myself formally to you. Your mother and I have been making friends. It is like being at a masquerade not knowing who and what people are; and it saves so much idle speculation and back-stair ferreting-out to label one's self at once. I am Miss Ballinger, spinster, aged twenty-five, travelling with her brother, Sir Mordaunt Ballinger, Baronet and member of Parliament. Any discreet question you like to ask I am prepared to answer; for I have a mania for asking questions myself, as your mother knows by this time; and I don't want any unfair advantage."

The young man looked at her fixedly for a moment, and then laughed. He had never met any one like this young lady. Was she a specimen of her country? He knew so few of them.

"All the questions I shall ask will be mental ones, which you will answer, whether you like it or not," he said. "I find those replies, unconsciously given, so much more satisfying than any others. Little mother, you look tired; lie down here. Perhaps Miss Ballinger will continue her quarter-deck walk with me."

He tucked up the "little mother" on a deck-chair, with a plaid round her legs; then turned, and resumed his walk with Miss Ballinger. She began at once:

"What a charming face Mrs. Barham has! She reminds me of Scheffer's picture of the mother of St. Augustine—only younger."

"Yes. It is a pity I am not more like *him*. The only point of resemblance that I can recall is, that whenever I pray to be made good, I add, like Augustine—'but not to day, O Lord!'"

She turned her bright, penetrating glance full upon him, half laughing, half serious.

"Are you one of the men who are anxious to be thought very wicked? I should not have expected that. But there I am, questioning again! Well, never mind. Strong characters are rarely saints in youth, I suppose; though I don't know why they shouldn't be, if they are only strong *enough*."

"Perhaps I am not strong at all."

"Yes, you are. Your mouth and chin told me that, before you spoke."

"You are a physiognomist. How about the eyes? Do you attach any importance to them?—those 'windows of the soul?'"

"He does not expect me to say that his win-

dows are luminous ones, magnificently draped, does he? If he does, he shall be disappointed," thought Grace. What she said was:

"Eyes are the most deceptive feature—there is no trusting them. I have grown quite tired of fine eyes."

The young American smiled in a peculiar manner. "I am beginning my mental questions."

"What do you mean?"

"I am wondering whether you yourself are always perfectly truthful."

She flushed, and looked annoyed. "You are quite justified. Of course, I was not speaking the exact truth—though it is really my opinion that eyes do not denote character."

"I think your eyes do—better than your words, perhaps."

"As how?"

He smiled again. "Well, that brings the confession that *I* was not perfectly truthful. I was not wondering—I never doubted that you were truthful and straightforward generally; though you might say things that were not quite so, some times."

She burst out laughing.

"Upon my word, Mr. Barham! That is a pretty character, and, unfortunately, it is quite true. It is lucky I am not like Mrs. Van Winkle

—have you spoken to Mrs. Van Winkle? she is most amusing—who told me she loved flattery, in every form; there was no amount of it she could not swallow! Now, I like it, of course—what woman doesn't! But it must be in homœopathic doses. You have administered an infinitesimal grain of it wrapped up in a very wholesome bitter. I shall take care what I say to you in future."

"Pray, don't. That would be punishing my impertinence too severely. Yes, Mrs. Van Winkle spoke to me this morning, hearing I was from Harvard. She said she felt that those who were fellow-workers in one field should interchange thoughts. I suppose I stared, for she hastened to inform me that she had written a book which was pronounced to be a work of genius."

"Her *naïveté* is quite delightful!"

"Presently she went on to tell me that a painter had begged her to sit to him as Clio, when she was in Rome, and that her hands and feet had been modelled by a sculptor in Paris. I suppose that was *naïve*."

"Certainly it was. Most of us would have gone a roundabout way to convey the same information. We are all vain. My vanity is fed by the belief that people will find out what a nice person I am, without my giving a sort of auctioneer's

inventory of my merits, as that dear innocent Mrs. Van Winkle does."

"Innocent? Well! . . . She told me her husband would be the next minister to England, and that she would not return there till then, as she did not choose to go about, having to explain herself. I thought—with the Paris sculptor and the modelling—that a *foot*-note might be explanation enough. But I have not an idea what she meant."

"She meant that the Van Winkles are not to be herded with common travelling Americans."

"I have been a common travelling American myself for the last three months."

"And I dare say you *had* sometimes to explain yourself."

"Never. I know too well the way in which my pushing countrymen are spoken of, to seek any one. Those who have sought me have had to do so without any 'explanation.'"

"Proud as Lucifer," thought Grace. "Clearly *not* the stuff of which saints are made." Then aloud, "How did you like Europe?"

"Very much, for a time—for many times, I might say. I should like to travel there yearly. I hope it may be possible for me to do so. But I would not live out of my own country."

"Because you prefer it as a residence—or from a sense of duty?"

He demurred. "The associations of early life have a strong hold on one, and there are special reasons in my case why—" Here he broke off; then began anew: "Of course, there are things I dislike, things I deplore, in my own country; but she has a great future before her, and it behooves every American to do his best to advance that future; so that the generation that follows may be richer than the present, in wisdom and in worth."

"Not only in wealth?"

"You have been told that is the only god we worship? Well, that is true, perhaps, of the majority—not of all. And this god, when he has been won by the self-made man, is generally a very munificent god with us. Where will you find colleges, hospitals, libraries, galleries, the gift of private individuals, to the same extent as with us? Every city has its record of them—a record to be proud of."

"I see I shall have to strike a balance in my judgment between you and Mr. Ferrars. He is pessimist, and you are optimist, as regards your country."

"I do not know Mr. Ferrars," said the young man, dryly. "But it is a cheap way of showing your superiority, to decry your own nation and point out all its shortcomings."

"There is such a thing as exaggerated patriotism that will not admit shortcomings. As a nation, you are so over-sensitive to criticism. Why, you will not allow one of your own best writers to represent certain types, to laugh at certain follies, without crying out that he is unpatriotic! The whole stock in trade of Dickens and Thackeray was laughing at our shams and vulgarities, and who ever thought of bringing such a charge against *them?*"

"We *are* over-sensitive, but then we are very young, remember."

Here a slight accident interrupted their progress. Mrs. Courtly was emerging from the main gangway just as Miss Ballinger and her companion crossed it, and a lurch of the vessel, for the wind had been gradually rising and the sea was no longer perfectly smooth, sent the unprepared lady, adroit and nimble as she was, into the young man's arms. She was a small, slight woman, exquisitely built and proportioned, no longer in her first youth, with a pale face lit by a wonderful smile, which recalled to Grace Leonardo da Vinci's enigmatical "Joconde."

Apologies on both sides, with a good deal of laughing on the lady's part, followed. Grace came forward, and a few words were exchanged, during which Barham took off his hat and walked

away, to Miss Ballinger's surprise—perhaps, it may be said, to her annoyance.

"Who is your friend whom I so unceremoniously embraced?" asked Mrs. Courtly, in her low, musical voice. "Why is he gone away? I am so sorry to have interrupted your walk."

"If he had wished, I suppose, he would have stayed. He is a professor from Harvard University; his name is Barham."

"Really? I never heard of him, and I have so many friends at Harvard. My home in Massachusetts is not so very far distant. He is very good-looking; is he clever?"

"Certainly; but not much of a society man. He suffers from a form of shyness which I suppose is not common in the States—a dread of being thought forward, pushing. I am sure that is why he beat a retreat."

"How very singular! It was I who was forward and pushing!" Here she laughed softly. "You must present him formally to me; I shall be delighted to make his acquaintance; I love to gather round me all that is best worth knowing. By the way, your brother has been promising to bring you to stay with me. I am within easy reach of Boston. I hope you won't object."

"You are very good; it sounds delightful. I have always looked forward to seeing Boston, and

I hope my brother will go there. I have heard there is nothing like Boston society."

"You must not expect the magnificence of New York. We New-Englanders live much more simply; but there is a pleasant mixture of the grave and the gay. I am reproached with being too gay —too frivolous for my years. But my principle is to enjoy everything as long as I can, to live and to let live. And so I get a great deal of pleasure out of existence."

She said this in a low, cooing voice that was wonderfully persuasive.

"And confer a great deal," rejoined Grace. "Most people get so soon *blasés*, it is refreshing to find any one who retains youthfulness of spirit into middle age. But, then, you have a wonderful variety of interests in life, I am told."

"Oh, yes; I care for a great many things, I am glad to say—books, and pictures, and people. If I cannot get some excitement out of one, I do out of another; life is so curious, so full of problems. Who told you about me? If you listen to all you hear—"

"It was Mr. Ferrars — evidently a very true friend—who spoke of you."

"Oh! poor Quintin Ferrars! Yes, he is a good friend."

"Why do you say 'poor'?"

"Because he has not had a happy life."

"Partly his own fault, I should think. He strikes me as not having a happy temperament."

"Is that his own fault?" asked Mrs. Courtly, smiling. "He has not a happy temperament, it is true. I have always told him that he does not extract the enjoyment he might out of life—though it struck me he was doing so successfully this morning! But, poor fellow! he has been heavily handicapped; circumstances have been against him, they have embittered everything."

Grace was dying to ask what those circumstances were, but something restrained her. Her acquaintance with Mrs. Courtly was but slight; it would hardly be seemly for Grace to press for information about Mrs. Courtly's friend which that lady thought fit to conceal. Presently Mrs. Courtly said,

"Will you come and have tea in my cabin at five o'clock? I have a deck cabin; it can hold half a dozen people—Mrs. Van Winkle, and your brother, and Quintin Ferrars, and one other man; shall I ask Jem Gunning?"

"Not for me, please; I have enough of him at three meals every day. Do you like him?"

"Why, yes. Jem is not a bad boy in his way. A clever woman would twist Jem round her finger, and might make him very different to what he is."

"What he is, is not pleasing to me at present. Perhaps if I meet him hereafter, when he has been duly twisted by the clever woman, I may appreciate him more."

"How sarcastic you are!" purred Mrs. Courtly, showing her white teeth; "all our young men will be quite afraid of you, Miss Ballinger."

"I am not sarcastic—far from it," said Grace, laughing. "Only I know what I like and what I don't."

"You prefer your friend, the Harvard professor?" She smiled with a malicious twinkle in her hazel eyes. "Well, will you invite him? Bring him with you."

Grace was a little taken aback. "I—I can't bring him. I will deliver your message . . . if I see him. . . . But he is no *friend* of mine. I never spoke to him till half an hour ago."

After a few more words interchanged, the two ladies separated. Later in the afternoon, Grace found Mr. Barham, seated by his mother, reading, in the upper deck cabin. It had by this time become rough and cold, and only the very hardy were still pacing the deck.

"I have a message from Mrs. Courtly (the lady who would have fallen but for you to-day). She wishes to make your acquaintance, Mr. Barham, and asks if you will come and have tea in her

cabin at five o'clock. My brother and I are going."

The young man had laid down his book, and had risen. He looked much surprised.

"What can Mrs. Courtly want to know me for? I am not a society man, and I cannot do anything to amuse her. . . . But . . . of course . . . if . . . you are quite sure—"

"I should not transmit such a message if I were not quite sure. You will do as you please about accepting the invitation." Then, turning abruptly to Mrs. Barham, "Can you recommend to me a thoroughly representative American book—I mean representative of real American life, not from the satirical or humorist point of view? I see there is a capital library here."

"Our New England life is very well depicted in Mary Wilkins's tales, and also in Sarah Orne Jewett's. They are truthful pictures of our quiet homes, our quiet lives, removed from the turmoil of the great cities. But perhaps you might find them dull."

"I have read them, and thought them charming. Spinsterhood is great, and Miss Wilkins is its prophet. But I want to know about something besides those dear old women. Miss Jewett, also, charming as she is, is circumscribed. I want something wider in range. I was given 'On Both

Sides' the other day. It amused me, but as a caricature."

"You mean that the English are caricatured—not the American," said Saul Barham, with a smile.

"Yes, I do. No woman in society ever said the outrageously vulgar things Mrs. Sykes is made to say. She may *think* them—she may even act them—she could not *say* them. It strikes a false note. Then there is a beautiful young man, supposed to be a typical young man of society, who tells a long story in which he repeats over and over again, 'I *says* to him.' Why! no one above a stable-boy ever used such a form of speech."

"Is it quite possible for one nation to judge another fairly?" asked Mrs. Barham, gently.

"I hope so. Why not? I am sure I have no anti-American prejudices. But as we are so closely bound together by language and origin, it is more difficult for us not to look at differences between us from an English standpoint, than it is when we are discussing any European nation. And no doubt it is the same with you, if you confess it."

"I do confess it," said the young man.

Mrs. Barham murmured something about there being "quite a number of persons in America who imitate everything English now."

Saul laughed.

"Why, we have a cousin who is so anxious to be taken for an Englishman that we can scarcely understand what he says, he swallows his words so."

After which he recommended two books to Grace, one of which she found on the shelves disengaged, and departed with it.

CHAPTER III

The small gathering in Mrs. Courtly's cabin at five o'clock, which looked at first as if it would be what Mordaunt Ballinger called "frosty," ended, by reason of the hostess's tact and charm of manner, in assimilating fairly well. The men were of course the difficult ingredients to "mix;" they always are when not homogeneous. Ballinger felt, and rightly, that he and Ferrars had not much in common; it would require a shipwreck to make them intimate. Ferrars probably did not trouble his head about the young baronet, except as being the brother of the most delightful girl he thought he had ever met. Saul Barham was an unknown quantity to both men. To Ballinger he was "a young Yankee, not bad-looking, but a willowy sort of chap, got up in a reach-me-down, and wants his hair cut awfully." Ferrars regarded his young countryman superciliously, as he did most things at first. And the young Harvard professor showed no keen desire to conciliate either of the men whom he now spoke to for the

first time. Mrs. Van Winkle displayed an evident intention of securing Sir Mordaunt Ballinger's undivided attention, by inviting him to share a portmanteau with her, the seats in the cabin being few. But it was not to indulge in *têtes-à-têtes* that Mrs. Courtly had brought her friends together; they could do that on deck. With the pouring out of the Russian tea, and the diffusion of some wonderful cakes, produced from a tin, she contrived adroitly to break up the duets, for Ferrars was talking art in a low voice to Miss Ballinger, and she herself had been drawing out the young professor. She felt that the conversation ought now to become general.

"You must come and see me when you are back in Cambridge," she had been saying to Barham, as she made tea. "I am quite an easy distance by rail from there, and I want you to look over my books. I am devoted to books . . . not that I am a great scholar—far from it. Do you read Italian? Yes! I am so glad. Then, with your knowledge of Latin, you will help me to decipher some old provincial poems which I picked up at Quaritch's the other day, and of which I believe there are very few copies extant. I have some Elzevirs, too, that may interest you, and several first editions. Talking of first editions, dear Mrs. Van Winkle, is it true that the whole of the first

edition of your 'Phryne' is sold out? Have you read it, Sir Mordaunt? Of course *you* have, Quintin!"

The men were spared replying by the fair authoress, a decorative woman, with lively eyes and a very elaborate pink tea-gown.

"The demand for my book has been very great," she said, with a sweet smile, "but I know nothing of the details. I have had applications from all the chief magazines begging me to write for them, and I suppose I must do so. Of course my name has something to do with the success. People know that, as a leader of society, I write of what I understand."

"Then I conclude your book is modern, and has nothing to do with the famous Greek . . . beauty?" inquired Ferrars, gravely.

"Only by analogy," replied Mrs. Van Winkle, sipping her tea slowly. "The whole world sits in judgment now upon any woman whose beauty or whose talent makes her conspicuous. If she has a symmetrical form she is always accused of being too *decolletée*."

"You forget that the judges forgave Phryne."

"Oh! they were *men*. Of course it isn't men's tongues a woman has to fear in society. They will make love to her, and praise her before and behind her back, if she amuses them—and en-

courages them just a little. It is the wives and the mothers, *they* are the Areopagus which sits in judgment upon the woman who attracts men."

"You must have suffered severely at their hands," said Sir Mordaunt, as he looked up into her face with an amused expression.

"I don't know about *suffered*. We are all arraigned, we married women, who amuse ourselves, and who have inspired perhaps a *grande passion*—is it not true, Mrs. Courtly? But they are a little afraid of *me*. When a gifted woman has social position and fortune she is comparatively safe. She may follow her own course, and is only accused of the eccentricities of genius—or, at worst, of being a little mad. I know," she added, complacently, as she bit a cake with her small white teeth, "that is what they say of me."

Mrs. Courtly felt rather uncomfortable at the turn the conversation had taken. She was not quite sure how far Miss Ballinger might be amused or scared by Mrs. Van Winkle's utterances. It was necessary to make a diversion before one of the men should throw back the ball; so she said, quickly,

"Isn't it Marcus Aurelius—or somebody—who says, 'It is a good thing to be abused'? And, as you say, your position is so well established! You will look after Miss Ballinger and her brother

in New York, I know, and see that they get invitations to anything that is going on. How long do you remain there, Miss Ballinger?"

"You must ask my brother. He has some business in New York. The length of our stay depends entirely on him."

"I shall do all that lies in my power to make it agreeable to you," said Mrs. Van Winkle, with cordiality. Her glance, which was at first directed to Grace, revolved slowly, till it rested on Sir Mordaunt.

"I am glad to hear you have business," said Ferrars, addressing the latter directly for the first time. "With an object—a direct interest—your visit to the United States may repay you. I was telling Miss Ballinger that if she expected either picturesque beauty or art, she would be disappointed, but she declares, like Pope, that 'the proper study of mankind is man,' and she comes among us, wishing to see something of our society. You will show her the most costly samples of our social fabrics, Mrs. Van Winkle, but how about brains? You who are such a decorative ornament of literature, I hope you will get together some clever people for Miss Ballinger."

"Oh! brains are of no account in our New York society. I might pick up a brain or two, if I were to sweep around very diligently, perhaps,

but the world I live in is intensely frivolous, and whenever I meet a clever man I feel like putting him under a glass case, he's too good for daily use. Miss Ballinger will have to get Mr. Barham to show her the brains of society at Cambridge."

Here she smiled sweetly at the young man; and he spoke for the first time, laughing lightly, as he said,

"I am afraid we are all in glass cases there, classified and catalogued. But, without putting Mrs. Van Winkle to the labor of searching for brains in New York, I am sure if Miss Ballinger meets some of our brilliant lawyers and noted speakers she will find there is as good talk to be listened to there as anywhere in Europe. I hope she will not judge of American society from any one set, or any single specimen."

"Quite right, Mr. Barham," said Mrs. Courtly, with a kindly nod. "Though hardly complimentary to *us*, I think you are quite right. No Frenchman would have said that; but you are too much in earnest to think of our feelings — Mrs. Van Winkle's and mine."

Miss Ballinger came to his defence. "It is really more complimentary to think you both incapable of personally applying Mr. Barham's remark than if he had fenced it round with those leafless twigs of conventional politeness which

only draw attention to what they were meant to conceal."

"The leaves, themselves, did that in Paradise," murmured Mrs. Van Winkle, leaning back with a dreamy air.

Ballinger was the only one who laughed. Mrs. Courtly coughed, and did not seem quite at ease. Ferrars said quickly,

"Mr. Barham is quite right. Nothing is so misleading as personal experience in forming our estimate of a nation. My friend goes to England, and lives in his hotel all the time (and very bad hotels they often are, it must be owned), I have the good chance to meet a few people I know, and am received with kindness and hospitality. What are our respective opinions worth? Never generalize from individuals. Out of us four Americans who are round this table, only Mr. Barham, perhaps, is the least a typical product of our country."

"Why so?" asked Miss Ballinger.

"Because I see he has great belief in our institutions, our future, our indomitable force. As to me, I gave up any such belief when I was twenty. You said yesterday you doubted if I was a good American. If to believe that our crooked paths are straight, our rough ways smooth, and to proclaim on the housetops that we are the greatest

nation on earth—if this is to be a good American, then I am not one."

"I never heard that to love one's country was to be blind to her faults," said Barham, quickly.

"Mr. Ferrars belongs to no country," Mrs. Van Winkle fanned herself as she spoke, with half-closed eyes. "Nor do I. I am more like a Russian, I believe—a Russian George Sand—that is what I feel like. And you, dear Mrs. Courtly? Are you not more French? Madame Récamier, with any number of Chateaubriands round you, it suits you to a T."

"Are Chateaubriands so plentiful?" laughed Mrs. Courtly, gently. "I wish I could find them! They would last so long, too. Madame Récamier's friendships did not depend upon her youth. I should like to end my days lying on a sofa, and surrounded by my old friends."

"Nothing reconciles one so much to the trouble of living as those strong links which stand the test of time," said Ferrars, looking with steady, level eyes at Mrs. Courtly.

"Ah! Quintin, yours is one of those iron natures whose links never melt—not very malleable, but which will stand any amount of strain, as I know."

"Never melts?" exclaimed Mrs. Van Winkle,

opening her pretty blue eyes in affected wonder. "I prefer a man who melts."

"And whose links are of gold?" said Ferrars, without looking at her. Then he went on, while a flush mounted to her cheek, "I am not one of the precious metals."

"There is a great deal of brass," replied the lady, more tartly than she had yet spoken. "Give me another cup of tea, dear, with lots of sugar; I want something sweet after Mr. Ferrars's acidity. So you are going to the far West, your brother tells me, Miss Ballinger? What a journey!"

"And yet you think nothing of running backwards and forwards to Europe?" laughed Grace.

"Oh! traversing our own continent is different; not half such a change, and very trying to the complexion. Even in the East one gets awfully dried up. Then, there is nothing to see when one gets there."

"It is not only prophets who have no honor in their own country!" cried Sir Mordaunt. "Fancy, my sister has never seen the Tower of London! And it is the more shameful, as I was there for a year."

"Not imprisoned?" inquired Mrs. Van Winkle, with mock gravity.

"The next thing to it—I was quartered there."

"Then you are a guardsman? I always won-

dered whether all guardsmen were like Guy Livingstone. Now I know."

"Well, you see in me a deceased guardsman. I left the service a few months ago."

"Do tell me what brings you out to America. An heiress? Of course, you have been very wicked. Are you going to '*ranger*' yourself?"

"Neither reformation nor matrimony is in my mind, I am afraid," laughed Ballinger. "Only self-interest and curiosity. I have one or two friends —one, a brother-officer—settled on a ranch in Colorado. I am going to look about and see if I can find a good investment for a little money."

"I think it will be so refreshing to see ranch-life, after the conventionalities of civilization," said Grace.

"You will find a week of it will go a long way," and Mrs. Courtly shook her head. To her, existence without its intellectual refinements and pictorial luxuries—all the delicate and varied *entrées* she provided for herself in the pleasant feast which she called "life"—without these, existence would hardly be worth having.

"I would rather live on a ranch than work in Wall Street all my days," said Barham.

"Wall Street has solid compensations," observed Ferrars.

"I think money can be too dearly bought,"

returned the younger man, quickly. "At the sacrifice of all independence, I would not be rich, if I could."

"How sweet of you, Mr. Barham! In these mercenary days to hear such a sentiment from a man—it is quite too lovely for anything!"

Mrs. Van Winkle spoke the words with a languid drawl, but there was a humorous twinkle in her eye. In point of fact, it was often difficult to tell how far she meant her utterances to be taken seriously. Grace, in the spirit of anti-humbug, struck in gayly,

"I am a Philistine. I like riches. I should like to know once how it feels to be *very* rich. I think I could work in Wall Street—whatever that may mean—all my life, if I could earn lots of money; but I never shall."

Barham looked at her, with a steady gaze. Was she in earnest?

"I heard the worship of wealth was as great in London as in New York—but I did not believe it."

"Well," said Mordaunt, "all I can say is, I know several instances in the Life Guards where a fellow's having a pot of money prejudiced other fellows against him. They sent him to Coventry because his father dropped his h's, and they made up their minds the son couldn't be a gentle-

man. I know one very nice chap who couldn't stand it—had to leave. So you see the worship of money isn't universal."

"We don't drop our h's," Ferrars said. "But there are few colloquial sins we may not commit with impunity if we have half a million of dollars a year, and entertain."

"Ah! You have it there!" interposed Mrs. Van Winkle. "Our rich people are bound to entertain. Otherwise they are of no account. It is very logical. We, of the blue blood, want amusements, but are too poor to give magnificent *fêtes*. We honor them with our presence, and the obligation is more than repaid."

"I honor the sentiment. It is worthy of blue blood, and it carries conviction with it."

"Mr. Ferrars is detestably satirical, but no one minds what he says," and the lady rose. "It is nearly dinner-time. We must leave you, my dear." And so the party broke up.

Next day Mrs. Courtly found an opportunity of saying to Miss Ballinger, in her soft, deprecatory way,

"I am afraid you may form a false impression of Mrs. Van Winkle. She is really a very kind woman, as well as a clever one, and she is a very good wife, too, only you see her failing. She likes to astonish people. That makes her say

things occasionally which—which she had better not."

Grace smiled. "I suppose she has been spoiled—she gives one that idea. Did she marry for money?"

"Why, no! What made you think that?"

"She looked so annoyed when Mr. Ferrars talked of 'links of gold.' I am sure he meant something disagreeable by it. He looked it."

"Mr. Van Winkle is by no means rich, but she married him because she was in love; and they are really very happy. He is of a very good old Knickerbocker family. She is very proud of that, as you see. She has always a train of admirers; it means nothing, and Mr. Van Winkle does not object. That is to say, he doesn't *generally*. It is said he did so once, in the case of a man who was very rich, when some one ill-naturedly started the idea that this person helped the establishment along. It got to Mr. Van Winkle's ears, and he gave the man his *congé* there and then. It is the only time he ever asserted his authority, and I am not sure that his wife did not like him all the better for it. If Quintin Ferrars meant anything by his 'golden links,' it was that; but I really think it was a chance shot, and Mrs. Van Winkle—"

"What about her?" said Sir Mordaunt. He

had come up, unperceived by Mrs. Courtly ; and she stopped short on seeing him. "I think that woman is the greatest sport I've met for a week of Sundays ! How she does blow her own trumpet ! I never can be dull in New York as long as she is there. What sort of fellow is the male Winkle, Mrs. Courtly ?"

"A very nice man, but he doesn't amount to much. He is a *Van*. You mustn't call him Winkle—*tout court*."

"A descendant of the famous Rip, I suppose. We have all had rips for ancestors, at some time or other, no doubt !" and the young man laughed.

"For shame ! to decry your pedigree in that way ! We are very proud of our descent—when we have any ; and if we know who our great-grandfather was, we always speak of him as having fought in the War of Independence."

The brother and sister laughed ; and the subject of the Van Winkles was not continued further.

CHAPTER IV

The rest of the voyage was performed swiftly and uneventfully. Mordaunt Ballinger walked the quarter-deck for hours with certain American men, whom he encouraged to talk of their various interests and enterprises, and believed he was gaining a vast store of useful information thereby. The acquaintances brought together in Mrs. Courtly's cabin saw more or less of each other, according to their proclivities; and in some cases intimacies were formed which could hardly die the natural death which is the common lot of close companionship on board ship. This was especially so in the friendship which Miss Ballinger had established with the Barhams, and though they lay more out of her path, so to speak, than the others, she resolved not to let the threads of her intercourse with mother and son drop on landing. She felt really interested in the young man; she should be sorry to think this was to be the end of their long talks and discussions, pacing the deck, or watching the moonlight upon the

sea, on warm nights, as they leaned over the bulwarks.

Quintin Ferrars also she had grown to know, and to like better. That is to say, she liked some parts of him better and disliked other parts less, recognized his ability and made more allowances for his cynicism, as all women do for the cynicism of a man who is never cynical at their expense. Conversation with him stimulated thought; and, though it generally roused opposition, left something behind it to be pondered over and rediscussed with that other self which only makes itself heard very often when both speakers are silent.

Mrs. Courtly Grace admired and liked more and more. She had expected to find the gracious little lady too much of "a man's woman" to take much thought for her, an English girl. They could have but a small community of interest, she thought; and "men's women" were, as a rule, distasteful to her. But, whatever her faults might be, Mrs. Courtly, she felt sure, was a really kind woman; and, moreover, so appreciative, so amusing, and so many-sided, that Grace found it impossible to resist her charm. What a blessed gift (taking too low a stand among the virtues—indeed, not regarded as a virtue at all by some) is tact! Mrs. Courtly possessed it in a conspicu-

ous degree. She never said anything to wound the susceptibilities of her audience ; whereas Mrs. Van Winkle, clever as she was, never seemed to have any perception of when she might, with impunity, astonish her audience, and when it would be wiser to sacrifice that keen but momentary enjoyment. Vanity, and a desire to maintain her reputation for audacious wit, rendered her case-hardened against shocked looks. She said to Grace,

"You know, the very last person with whom one should be seen in New York society is one's husband. Now, *I* started very badly ; I began married life by being really in love with mine, and, socially, it nearly ruined me. It has taken me fifteen years to live it down, and I am only just recovering from the fatal mistake I made."

The girl knew exactly what value to attach to such utterances as these. She never gratified the speaker by looking surprised.

Grace stood on the deck with Saul Barham as the *Teutonic* slowly, almost imperceptibly, neared the landing-wharf. A thick fog had shrouded the great Statue of Liberty, the shores of New Jersey, Staten Island, and all the features of the beautiful sea-avenue to New York.

"I am angry," said Barham, "that you should not have a better impression of the city on land-

ing. It is too bad to have a fog here to greet you that is worthy of London."

"A delicate attention on the part of America to make us Britishers feel 'at home.'"

"I hope you will appreciate *all* such attentions," he returned, smiling, "and not be too much influenced by first impressions. Ladies, I believe, generally are."

"And men?"

"Well, a man—at all events an American—is slower in forming any in his intercourse with foreigners. You see, English manners are different in some ways from ours. It wouldn't do for us to trust first impressions very often."

"Has your remark any personal application?" asked Grace, laughing. "Did my manners repel you at first?"

"No," he replied, quietly; "I had never met a young lady like you, and yet I can't exactly say why; for your manners have more of the frankness of our nicest American girls than those of most Englishwomen I have met. And Englishmen—well, as I say—they require to be known."

Miss Ballinger was silent. She felt sure that her brother's free-and-easy, rather *de-haut-en-bas* manner was in the sensitive young American's mind. She knew also what a good fellow Mordaunt really was at heart, and how either man

if he could discard his husk would appreciate the other. But the husk of manner is as necessary a protection to the Englishman, who is habitually on the defensive, as the unfashionable clothes worn by the American were to his body. She hoped these two would draw nearer to each other by and by, but at present there was nothing to be done. Presently he said,

"That Lady Clydesdale—is she really a great lady? Her opinions and her manners seem to us rather odd."

"I wish I could say she is not well-born, but she is. I shouldn't mind her opinions if she had only better manners. Such an incendiary should at least offer her firebrands with some persuasive charm, not fling them in your face; pray don't regard her as a typical Englishwoman. I am ashamed of my countrywoman."

He smiled.

"And yet I fancy she will have great success with some of our advanced women. When are you coming to Boston, Miss Ballinger?"

"I have no idea; but I shall let you know as soon as we arrive. I have promised Mrs. Barham to go out and spend a day at your father's house. It will interest me to see something of your New England village life."

"Well," he began, hesitatingly, "I will not

discourage you. Mother will love dearly to receive you, but you must not expect anything like an English village, or—or the comforts of an English rectory. Things are much simpler with us and quite different."

"I am prepared for that. If they were not different they would not interest me; though, indeed, all that concerns your mother would interest me. I took to her at once—I told you so—and, in that case, my first impressions have strengthened more and more."

He replied, gravely,

"Our having met you, Miss Ballinger—your having spoken to my mother has made a great difference in our voyage. I shall never forget it. When we meet again it will probably not be on the same terms. How can it be in a great city? I shall call, and you will be kind enough to say you are glad to see me; but the informal intimacy of our long talks on deck—can it be renewed on shore? I think not. Still, I shall always look back to those hours as some of the most delightful in my life."

"I hope they will be renewed. I assure you I shall always remember them with the greatest pleasure."

"Ah! you have many such pleasant memories, no doubt. I have very few."

The crowd, the shouts of porters, emissaries

from hotels, and friends of passengers, who now rushed on board, put an end to further conversation. Grace had only time to bid him and his mother good-by (she had already taken leave of her other friends), when she was hurried off by her brother to the carriage which was waiting to take them to the hotel.

And here I will seize the opportunity, while our travellers are landing, of saying a few words as to the Ballinger family, which will make the position of this brother and sister more easily understood.

Sir Henry Ballinger, who died only two years ago, was, as every one knows, a remarkable man: prominent in politics, he had been twice a cabinet minister, distinguished as an author upon currency and international law, absorbed in the frigid, more than in the burning, questions of the day, but still so much absorbed as to have little leisure to bestow upon his children. Their mother died when Mordaunt was sixteen and Grace was twelve; and what they would have done without Mrs. Frampton, their father's sister, who almost took Lady Ballinger's place in the household from that time forward, it is hard to say. Mordaunt was at Eton; he was an impressionable lad, who stood too much in awe of his father ever to make a friend of him, and to

whom the loss of a mother's sympathy meant more than it would to many boys. He was much less clever than his sister, but possessed far more "worldly wisdom," as it is called, which, from a high standpoint, is probably nearer akin to foolishness. Nevertheless, he had a capacity for strong attachment; and as a boy his mother had been everything to him. He was very fond of his sister, and as years advanced she became more and more prominent in his life; but at this time she was too young to be his companion, still less his confidante. Happily, Mordaunt and his aunt had always been great friends. He used to say he could talk more easily with her than with any one—her plane of wisdom was not too far above him. Soon after Lady Ballinger's death, Mrs. Frampton arrived on a long visit; and from that time filled the vacant place at the head of the table during several months each year. She had her own house in London, and when resident there the two establishments were separate; but when Sir Henry moved to the country, or if he took Grace abroad, Mrs. Frampton always accompanied them. Between the aunt and the niece there was also a strong affection; but, Grace's nature being less plastic than her brother's, Mrs. Frampton's influence was less than it was upon Mordaunt. As the girl grew up, the difference of

opinion on many points between her aunt and herself grew more marked. It did not prevent them being the best of friends, but their way of looking at many questions was diametrically opposed. Intellectually, Mrs. Frampton and her niece had much in common; but Mordaunt had that respect for his aunt's judgment which led him to consult her upon points where Grace would have decided for herself, and decided differently.

Grace's education had been a broken one: now sent to a foreign school for a year, when her father went to Australia, now left in her aunt's charge, to the tuition of governesses and masters. It is doubtful whether she had profited much by either. What she was she had made herself, more than had been made by instruction. She was not accomplished; but her bright, quick intelligence, and keen delight in books, stood her in good stead in her intercourse with all the clever men who flocked to her father's house. She had been in the world five years when he died, and was now nearly six-and-twenty. Early youth had had for her its usual illusions, its usual disappointments, but they had not embittered, they had only strengthened, the sweet, fresh nature, which retained a healthy capacity for enjoyment.

Within the past year she had suffered the keen-

est trouble she had yet known, and consequent upon this, and upon their divergent views, had occurred the nearest approach to estrangement between aunt and niece which they had ever known. It is not necessary in this place to enter into the nature of the cloud which had arisen, and had darkened the sky in that small household. Of course, Mordaunt Ballinger sided with his aunt—he always did in any family discussion—and Grace consequently pent up her hopes and her disappointments in silence, and with a brave face that told nothing. She did not go quite so much into the world during the following months, neither would she altogether shun society; and when the suggestion came from Mordaunt that she and Mrs. Frampton should accompany him to America, she hailed the idea. Change of scene, change of people, change of thought—she felt that all this was the best thing for her just now.

Mrs. Frampton was an odd combination of the child of nature and the woman of the world. Clever, impulsive, strong in her affections, unjust and implacable in her hatreds, often humorous, sometimes sarcastic, even at her own expense, she possessed an extraordinarily sound, clear judgment in all business matters, and such as concerned temporal welfare and advancement. There was no sacrifice she would not have made for her nephew and

her niece; but her devotion to Grace was perhaps even greater than to Mordaunt, though between him and herself there had never been a difference, and between her and Grace so many. This last subject of division, and the withdrawal of Grace's confidence, the feeling that there was one forbidden subject between them, had tried the elder woman sorely. She had been very bitter about it until Grace's demeanor had shown her that there could no longer be any discussion; if she attempted to renew it her niece left the room. In her inward heart she admired the noble-minded, resolute girl all the more for her attitude, though she never admitted that she did so. She spoke of it to Mordaunt as "reprehensible folly," which was justly punished—"but, thank goodness! there is an end, once and forever, to all *that*." She was delightfully inconsistent—it made her the amusing and provoking person she was—in all that did not pertain to hard-headed calculation and worldly perspicacity.

Mordaunt Ballinger found himself, at his father's death, with all the expensive habits that are bred in the life he was leading, and but very moderate means. Sir Henry's pension, of course, died with him; so did a considerable income, which he had enjoyed as chairman of certain railway and other companies. His son resolved to

rent his country-house, which was too expensive for him to keep up, and he left the Guards. The constituency which his father had represented offered to nominate him in the late baronet's place, and after a little hesitation he accepted the proposal, and was elected. These steps he had not taken without consulting Mrs. Frampton, whose influence had also been wisely exercised in restraining him from embarking in sundry speculations. His thoughts had now been turned for some time past to America, as an Eldorado, where he might improve his fortunes, as certain friends of his had done. Not that he meant to give up Parliament, leave England and all its pleasures, and live upon a ranch. That would not have suited Mordaunt at all. But there was "real estate" in some of the rising cities, silver mines, shares in canned-meat companies — railways, tramways, waterworks; surely in some of these he might find a good investment that would bring him in eight or ten per cent. Mrs. Frampton's present terror was that her nephew would be induced by some designing person to risk considerable sums in that land of reckless speculation. When he proposed, therefore, that she and Grace should accompany him on a visit to the United States, she jumped at the suggestion. To see the Americans *chez eux* was the thing of all

others she had always wished. It was odd that she had never been heard to express the wish before, but no one was surprised at anything Mrs. Frampton said. She suddenly remembered that she had some dear friends, the Hurlstones, in New York. It was eight years since she had seen or heard of them, but she would write to them at once; she felt sure they would do all in their power to make New York pleasant to herself and her belongings. But, as to that, her brother's —Sir Henry's— name was sure to secure them a warm welcome in a country where he had been so well known, and Mordaunt's being in Parliament would be an additional reason. It would be charming, too, for Grace; it would change the current of her thoughts. She only said this to Mordaunt, but the alacrity with which his sister acceeded to the proposition told him and his aunt that she felt this to be true.

Unfortunately, within a week of their sailing, just before Christmas, Mrs. Frampton was summoned by telegram to Geneva, by a sister of her late husband. The message stated that Miss Frampton was dying, and desired her sister-in-law's presence. Mrs. Frampton felt she had no choice but to obey. It was unfortunate. Had it only come a few days later! As it was, there was nothing for it but to start by the next train,

and let Mordaunt and Grace sail for New York without her. She promised to follow them, if Mordaunt resolved to remain all the winter in the States. And, on the other hand, she exacted a promise from him to embark in no scheme without consulting her. With this understanding they parted, hurriedly and sorrowfully, and a fortnight from the day when they had seen her into the train at Charing Cross they landed at New York.

CHAPTER V

THE day after her arrival this is the letter Miss Ballinger wrote to Mrs. Frampton :

"*9th January*, 1891.

"DEAREST AUNT SUSAN,—We were delighted to have your telegram just before starting, saying that Miss Frampton had rallied. I hope that her recovery will be so rapid as to enable you to leave her before many weeks are over. We miss you terribly, and shall do so, now that we have landed, more than ever. The voyage was really delightful—I never could have believed it would have gone so quickly ; and I had such an appetite, dear aunt, you would have been ashamed of me—instead of scolding, as you have done lately, because I ate so little. Mordy was very happy. He made friends with one man who was in pork, and another in oil. (I wonder which is nicest, to be in pork, or in oil ?) I always knew which he had been pounding the deck with, by his coming up to me afterwards, and saying, 'Do you know, I'm thinking seriously of going into pork'—or 'oil,' as the case might be. Then he fell in love with a dear woman, nearly old enough to be his mother, a Mrs. Courtly, whom most of the other women hated and abused—particularly odious Lady Clydesdale, who was on board. The things she said to me about her ! . . . I replied that Mrs. Courtly's only crime,

as far as I could see, was that she succeeded in attracting people—'and it is a pity more women don't try,' I added. 'They might at least *try*. For my part, my only serious aim in life is to make as many people like me as ever I can.' You should have seen her face of ineffable scorn as she turned away. You always say I am so toast-and-watery, aunt, that I can't hate. I have at last accomplished it; congratulate me; I really do hate Lady Clydesdale. Among those on board whom I liked was an odd, clever man named Ferrars. He would puzzle and, I believe, interest you. His past is mysterious: he never speaks of it, nor, indeed, of his present, for that matter. I discovered—by that exhaustive process of pumping which Mordy declares qualifies me to become a female interviewer (Oh! I have something to tell you about *that*, presently), that he is a Southerner, who lives chiefly in Europe, and that he writes; but *what*, and *where*, he curtly refused to say. He is quite indifferent to fame or money, and we generally disagreed about everything: and yet I got to like him. In contrast to Mr. Ferrars, who I am sure is not just to his country's future, whatever he may be to her present, there was a young professor from Harvard, an ardent patriot, who could not bear a word to be said against America. I do not feel sure that you would like this Mr. Barham as much as Mr. Ferrars, though he is to me much more interesting. But he is shy, and proud, and not very forthcoming, and you like turbulent youth. You *might* call him 'a prig,' which would distress me; but when you saw his mother, who is a Philadelphian, and I am certain must be a direct descendant of William Penn—so sweet, and drab-colored, and gentle, with the youngest and yet saddest face you ever looked upon, to be

the mother of this handsome young man—I say, when you looked upon her you would better understand why he is as he is : you would see that repression was born in him. Then there was a very rich young man from New York, who, like the young man in Scripture, ought to be told to go and sell all that he has, he would be so much happier. But, being very stupid, he doesn't know that he is not happy. He fancies the fatigue of doing nothing vigorously is enjoyment. Last of all, in our set—for you must know a steamer has its 'sets,' as well as a city—was the authoress of 'Phryne,' a rather *risky* novel which has had some success. You know how fatal it is to any but a strong head to write a moderately successful book. Mrs. Van Winkle is pretty and good-natured, but I suppose she was born foolish—the book has done the rest. We got through the Custom-House very well, though the officer seemed to think it impossible that any 'gent' could require so many 'pants' as Mordy brought with him. Virginie had frightened me so by saying I should have to pay duty on all my new gowns, that I was relieved when the inquisition was over. The first impression of New York in a fog was not favorable. Then the paving of the streets! Words cannot describe to you the condition of all the thoroughfares. Our London streets, Heaven knows, are bad enough in wet weather ; and even in dry are not above reproach compared with those of Paris ; but these !—the smallest town in Bulgaria would be ashamed of such atrocities. In some there are holes so deep that it is necessary to put a tub or a few stones round the gaping chasm to prevent people falling in. In some the electric wires were lying playfully about under the horses' feet, a storm, I am told, having brought them all down *more than a week ago!*

In Broadway the tramways intersect each other like the criss-crossings on some withered old palm ; but the line of life cannot be long, I imagine, for any one who resides there. We found comfortable rooms awaiting us at the hotel, but heated by a furnace such as only Shadrach & Co. could face. I flung open all the windows, to the manager's amazement. On the table was a splendid bouquet of crimson roses, with a note and a card. Whose do you think ? The Hurlstones. A very pretty attention, which I am afraid *we* should not have thought of. To be greeted thus on arrival by strangers—for to us they are absolute strangers — is very pleasant. The note was to ask us to dine with them to-night. Presently another card was brought me, on which was written 'Miss M. T. Clutch,' with a request that I would receive the lady. I innocently thought this must be another kindly disposed person, to whom friends had written, unknown to us, on our behalf. Judge of my consternation when a small, smirking woman entered, who introduced herself thus :

"'I represent *The New York Scavenger*, one of our prominent dailies, Miss Ballinger. Your name is well-known—I may say it is a household word among us. I trust you feel like answering a few questions which will be of interest to our readers.'

"'You must be mistaking me for some one else,' I replied. 'I am not eminent in any way, and your readers can not possibly—' She interrupted me, 'Oh ! but you are Sir Henry Ballinger's daughter, and, as such, are quite an interesting personality in America. We thought a heap of him. We claim that his book had a bigger circulation in the States than in England.'

"'It is a pity, then, that the States paid him nothing for

it,' I said. 'But do you really mean that you consider the relations of a well-known man to be public property? I have not even written a book that can be pirated. I don't lecture, or preach, or act. I am a perfectly obscure individual, whom your readers cannot possibly know anything about.'

"'Oh! but they *do*,' she insisted. 'They've seen your photograph among the society beauties; they've read your name in the society papers; they know you belong to the tip-top swells. And then there was the report which went all the round of the States that a German prince had nearly blown out his brains for love of you.'

"This was more than I could stand. I rose quickly. 'You must pardon me if I decline to continue this conversation. I am not accountable for all the rubbish you may have heard, but at least I will not be a party to disseminating more. Good-morning.'

"'You might just tell me why you are come here, and —and a few other things?'

"'Nothing at all. I wish to remain unnoticed.'

"'Well! That is real disobliging. But if you conclude to say nothing, I guess it's no good my staying.'

"'No,' I repeated after her, 'I guess it's no good.'

"And so she left the room. Mordy says I ought to have submitted to the infliction, and that I showed my usual want of worldly wisdom in snubbing a reporter. But why? It is all very well for him to see these people: he has had a tribe of them after him, and it may be proper and even useful that he should see them all. But in my case it would be worse than ridiculous, and I think it a gross piece of impertinence on Miss Clutch's part, trying to force publicity upon me.

"10*th January*.—I did not close my letter yesterday, finding it would catch to-day's mail if I posted it this morning ; and I knew you would like to hear about our dinner. The Hurlstones live in Fifth Avenue. It is a fine house, and everything about it is very grand—more grand, perhaps, than comfortable, according to our ideas. Americans have always been ruled by French taste, not only in dress, but in art and in certain social matters. The old French idea of a *salon* prevails here : gorgeous furniture, but no books, no writing-table, no evidences of occupation—except a grand piano, shrouded in some rare gold-woven tapestry. A few pictures by Corot, Daubigny, and Troyon adorn the walls. A bust of Mrs. Hurlstone by D'Epinay, with a bunch of roses in her hair, a necklace and a lace fichu over her shoulders, stands in the window. The two ladies were dressed, like their home, in the perfection of French taste. You know the father and the mother —who is still handsome—so I need not describe them ; but the daughter has grown up since they were in England, and is considered a beauty. She has delicate features, fine eyes, and pretty, though not brilliant, coloring. She is intelligent, vivacious, and meets one more than half way in her desire to be agreeable, as few English girls of eighteen would be able to do. She has, moreover, no twang, no ugly intonations of voice. Why don't I admire her more ? I kept asking myself this as I watched her. Though set off by dress to the best advantage, for some reason she does not produce the effect she should. There is one son, a year older, equally good-looking, perhaps even handsomer, but of that order of beauty that leaves no impression. I have already forgotten what he was like, except that he wore a very large diamond in his

shirt-front. The father took me in to dinner. I like him exceedingly, perhaps the best of the family; but all were most amiable. We were sixteen at dinner. Nearly every other guest was actually, or prospectively, a millionnaire. The women were all very well dressed, and wore a great many jewels—more than, perhaps, we should think quite good taste for this sort of party. They were, one and all, extremely civil—offering to take me out driving, and so on. One of them, a Mrs. Siebel, married to a wealthy banker of German origin, was particularly bright and amusing. I felt as if I knew her better in half an hour than I have ever done an Englishwoman in the same time. Another, Mrs. Thorley, who is the sovereign of all social entertainments here, was most gracious. She is going to give a great ball, to which she invited us. Some of the men struck me as clever; especially in conversation with their own countrywomen, their quickness and incisiveness were remarkable. With me they seemed a little stiff—a little on their p's and q's. One of the exceptions was a man whom they called 'George Ray the Third.' When I inquired the reason of this curious appellation I was told it was because his father and grandfather, both alive, were also Georges. He is a splendid animal, and he knows it. *He* certainly cannot be accused of being stiff. He planted his chair opposite me, leant his elbows on his knees, and told me of all the great people he knew in London, as though he thought that was the only topic that would interest me. This was not clever on George the Third's part. And yet he was anything but dull, and his perfect self-satisfaction entertained me. Mrs. Hurlstone seemed afraid he might prove perilously entertaining. She was good enough to inform me that he had not a penny—he

had run through everything. It was considerate of her. A much more amusing man, however, sat next me at dinner—a barrister named Sims, shrewd and humorous. I asked him who a little red-haired man with a waxed moustache opposite was; evidently a foreigner. He replied, 'He is Jean Jacques, Marquis de Tréfeuille, a *pair de France* of the first water, who is come over here to hitch on to an heiress, if he can. It was of him that some wag wrote,

"'"Tu es Jean, tu es Jacques, tu es roux, tu es sot,
Mais tu n'es pas Jean Jacques Rousseau!"'

I inquired if the girl next him was the future marquise. He shook his head. 'I doubt it. Even if she tumbles to the coronet, he will find her father won't make the settlement the marquis expects. He will give her a big allowance, but not a lump sum down, and I doubt if that will suit the marquis.' Before the evening was over Mr. Sims asked Mordy and me to dine with him at Delmonico's next week. I have no time for more.

"Your ever affectionate niece,

"GRACE BALLINGER.

"P.S.—Mordy says he will write to you by the next mail. He is already up to his eyes in engagements, and made a great deal of, a great deal *more* of than he is in London, so no wonder he likes it.

"Second P.S.—Mordy has just run in, shouting with laughter, this morning's *Scavenger* in his hand. 'Here you are!' he cried, 'and serve you right!' Then he read the cutting (I am not sunk so low as to mean a pun) which I enclose. I hope it will amuse you as much as it did *him*."

The paragraph was as follows:

"Sir Mordaunt Ballinger, Baronet and M.P., with his sister, landed here from the *Teutonic* yesterday. She is credited with being a London belle, and as such, and the daughter of one of the few Englishmen who have not written gross falsehoods concerning our country, we were desirous of interviewing her; but the young woman, with a rudeness peculiarly British, refused to submit to any interrogation. If she is a specimen of London's beauty we cannot congratulate that city on its show. A grenadier in petticoats, quite wanting in the delicacy and elegance we consider essential for beauty, best describes her. She is decidedly too fleshy. Her hair is not stylishly coifed, and there is a slip-sloppiness about her attire which denotes that she is not gowned in Paris. Altogether, we have seldom experienced a greater disappointment, both as to appearance and manner, in a woman of whom we had been taught to expect so much."

CHAPTER VI

Sir Mordaunt Ballinger was, indeed, as his sister had said, made a great deal of in New York society. It took but a few days to accomplish this. From the square, business-like letters to the blush-colored note, documents poured in on him all day long. There were invitations from men to lunch at the "Lawyers' Club down-town," to meet railway directors, promoters of mines, and others "who can give you information concerning," etc., etc. There were formal cards requesting his presence at great club dinners and private banquets; and there were informal invitations to every species of entertainment, from four o'clock teas upwards. No stranger in London ever found himself so swiftly and surely swept away on a tide of hospitality. Mrs. Frampton had rightly predicted that her brother's name would be an "open sesame" to his son and daughter. For Grace was not left out of all this cordial welcome. Ladies' luncheons, "to meet Miss Ballinger," theatre parties, receptions, diversions of

all kinds, were offered her. Still, it was not to be expected that she should be made quite so much fuss with as her brother. He was in some sense a public man. His name and position as his father's successor and an M.P. carried a certain weight; and then he was good-looking, with invariably charming manners to women, and variably attractive ones to men, with a genuine relish of a joke, which made him popular after dinner among those who told good stories — and where is the sharp American who has not a store of them? For serious, practical purposes, however, these gifts did not, as a certain May Clayton told him, "amount to much."

"You're a lovely man to flirt with, but, unless you find a girl with a pile, you're not eligible as a husband, you see."

May Clayton was a young lady whom he met at that dinner Mr. Sims gave at Delmonico's. She was a "bud," as Mr. Sims informed his English friends—that is, she was only just formally introduced to society. But, owing to her education, she had no shyness or diffidence, and in knowledge of the world and effrontery of speech might have been a woman of forty. She could not remember the time when she had not had flirtations, had not been escorted back from daily school by youthful beaux, had not been to parties every

week, and received bouquets and bonbons. It was astonishing she should be as captivating as she was, with all the bloom of youth rubbed off her and her speech interlarded with slang. But she was pretty, quick-witted, and her exuberant spirits were especially attractive to English people, who have so little gas in themselves they are glad to be lit and their stock replenished by others. She and a Mrs. Flynn were the only ladies besides Grace. Both of them could tell who their grandfathers were, both had connections who were among the Four Hundred, and yet neither were in what Mr. Sims called "the swim." They went to the Assembly and Patriarch balls, but the great leaders of society knew them not; they had not learned as yet to ingratiate themselves with the venerable leader of cotillons, Mrs. Flynn not being rich enough to give balls herself. They were cousins. Mr. Flynn had something to do with steel plates, and had failed twice. Perhaps this was why his pretty little wife had also failed. He rarely went into society, nor did Mrs. Clayton when she could avoid it, being apparently shelved as completely as though she were defunct. Her daughter already received visits, gave parties, and went everywhere, either with Mrs. Flynn or alone to houses where there was a matron. She told Sir Mordaunt she expected him to call, "and mind,

you're not to ask for mamma, but for me." And to Grace she said, "You're just as nice as ever you can be, and I hope you'll come and see me, but not with your brother." May was bright, and cheery, and shrill as a canary. She chirped and trilled away, drowning every one else's voice, even those of the young American men of the party, though they were jovial, high-spirited fellows, fully able to hold their own. She told one of them who was boasting a little to "come off that roof!" To Ballinger, who said something about the breast and the leg of a chicken, she said, "*We* always call it the brown meat and white meat."

"Would not that sound rather odd if applied to the human form?" he asked, with apparent innocence.

"Well! To be sure—I never thought of that! Then she seemed about to illustrate this by an example, but only laughed and turned the subject. Being challenged, she sang a stave of some "darky" song, to the delight of her auditors, then suddenly stopped. "No, it isn't nice. I won't sing any more," nor could any supplications induce her to continue. The audacious, wayward little creature had evidently clearly defined limits of her own, beyond which her high spirits never transgressed, no matter what en-

couragement she met. And her admirers understood this. They drew her out, and roared at her sallies; but there was no suspicion of license in the familiarity, which was nevertheless unlike anything to which the English guests had been accustomed.

"Have they all been brought up together?" Miss Ballinger asked her host.

"Oh, no. She is a Kentucky girl—only came here this winter. They probably danced the German together for the first time a few weeks ago. I asked her and Mrs. Flynn, because I thought it would amuse you more to meet two individual types of Americans of a certain stamp—as they are before the edge is taken off them—than the smart conventional women, such as we met the other night, who are much the same all the world over. You don't object?"

"On the contrary, I much prefer it. I am all for different nations having different codes of manners. I don't see why we are all to be built up on the same pattern."

Mr. Sims laughed. "Don't run away with the impression that this is the general code of manners. No; they belong to a certain type—a type which you English enjoy more than some of our own countrymen do, especially the Anglomaniacs. We shall soon have all the originality rubbed out

of us. There is Mrs. Flynn. She was twice as amusing a year or two ago. Now she is afraid to let herself *go*. She is eating her heart out, poor little woman, because she doesn't get on. I'm afraid she is going in for the 'prunes and prism' business."

"I shouldn't have thought it," said Miss Ballinger, smiling, as she glanced at the graceful little woman, who was carrying on a lively flirtation with Mordaunt.

After dinner they went to the theatre, where their host had taken a row of stalls, in order that his guests might see a thoroughly representative American play. Viewed as a literary production, the piece was amazing. But the capital picture of American country life, the naturalness of the characters, the humor and pathos of the acting in these scenes, redeemed that portion which was supposed to depict the graces and the vices of the moneyed aristocracy of New York. It seemed curious to Grace that the actors and actresses should not have caught even the faintest outward resemblance to ladies and gentlemen. On this point, however, her American acquaintances were more indignant, more bitter in ridicule, than herself.

Mordaunt Ballinger told his sister, as they drove home, that New York was an awfully nice

place. He believed he was being put up to a good thing or two, and he should be in no hurry to go away. Grace assured him she was quite content to remain there, as long as he liked. "Only don't fall in love with Miss Clayton," she added, laughing. "I don't think Aunt Susan *could* stand her for a niece."

He laughed in return. "She is very fetching. Why is it that no English girl has that *abandon?* But you needn't be afraid. She is too 'cute to marry a pauper. She warned me that I wasn't eligible. Fancy an English girl doing that! As Sims said (Sims is a deuced clever fellow), 'American women are like pins. Their heads will always prevent them from being lost, plunge they never so deep!'"

Quintin Ferrars called on the Ballingers the day after their arrival. He was remaining on in New York; for what purpose did not seem very clear, as he had told Grace during the voyage that business in Virginia was bringing him over, and that nothing but business would have induced him to come at this season. Nor had he any friends in New York. He seemed as much a stranger there as the Ballingers—indeed, more so, for they had invitations and he had none—and spoke with profound aversion of New York society. He visited with them the Metropolitan Mu-

seum of Art, some exhibitions of modern pictures, and several private collections which they had obtained permission to see. They also accompanied him to Daly's Theatre, where some of those slight comedies in which the canvas was nothing and the work thereon perfection were being performed. His remarks were always trenchant and original, his satire sometimes pungent. But it seemed to Grace that the man was more depressed, and at times more bitter, than he had appeared during the passage. The one thing which she did not see was that he was in love with her. Mordaunt, with not half her perspicacity, saw it, but held his peace. Grace had too recently had a bitter disappointment for him to fear that she would fall in love with the first middle-aged American who laid his heart and fortune at her feet. Still, it was well that he should make inquiries touching this Ferrars. But he could learn little or nothing. Those he asked said the man came of a good old Virginian stock, and was well off. But he had not lived in America for many years; during his occasional visits few saw him; if anything was to be known of his life, it was not in New York.

About Gunning, on the other hand, who had been unremitting in his attentions to Grace ever since their arrival, there were no inquiries to be

made. He had proposed Sir Mordaunt as a visitor to the Knickerbocker and Manhattan Athletic Clubs. There and elsewhere every one spoke well of the young man. He did not drink; he did not gamble; he had never been known to do a shabby thing. He was manly, straightforward, and liberal with his money. To his mother, who lived with him, he was an excellent son; to his companions a generous friend. He was not always "very good form," but Ballinger had seen worse failings than a little bombast, a little empty talk, knocked out of a man. He certainly did not wish his sister to marry an American, he said to himself; but if she should have a fancy that way, it would be as well if she would select one for whom every one had a good word, and who possessed a million of dollars a year.

Here is a passage from a letter to his aunt:

"People say no American man ever *really* likes an Englishman. Some of the young fellows may be a little jealous of a stranger, if he has any success here; but all I know is that most of them have been awfully kind to me, and many of them are capital company. I dare say one mustn't inquire too curiously how some of these great fortunes were made; that is no concern of mine. They all seem very glad to put one in the way of making a good thing. One fellow tells me that orange groves or fruit-orchards in Southern California are the safest investments; giving the largest returns, from 25 to 40 per cent.

on the capital laid out. Another advises 'reel estate,' as they call it, near one of the rising cities (mining centres) in Colorado. He says land can't fail to double or treble in value, only one must be content to let the money remain tied up for a time. A third recommends a Mexican opal mine which he says he knows is a first-rate thing. But the man I am most disposed to trust is a shrewd chap named Reid, to whom I brought a letter. He has been awfully kind explaining things. He says there is nothing like being on the spot, and recommends strongly my going out West and looking into these various investments. He has been explaining to me how the whole city is ruled by the Irish vote, and what awful corruption goes on. Talk of liberty! It seems to me they have precious little here—everything is sacrificed to party. And the worst of it is, the best men stand aloof. Fellows of high character and enormous wealth, who ought to have the chief weight in municipal matters, have none. They won't mix themselves up with the Irish, whom they hate. Apropos of Americans, the greatest *parti* in New York, a young chap named Gunning, is awfully gone on Grace. He crossed with us, and it began then; but she would have nothing to say to him, preferring the society of a man nearly old enough to be her father, named Ferrars (so like her, isn't it?), or of a thin, pasty-looking young professor, in horribly made overalls and a 'reach-me-down.' Graeey always *will* be queer in her tastes to the end of the chapter! Flowers come every morning from this Gunning. She can't return *them*, but she declines every other mortal thing he offers—his riding-horses, carriages, theatre-parties, etc. I have had difficulty in getting her to accept a party he is giving 'to meet Miss Bal-

linger'—that is the New York form when they want to do a person special honor. He heard her say she would like to see a Spanish dancer who is here, and who only performs at a low *café* where ladies can't go, but occasionally dances at private houses for a select circle—that is how he caught her. I wish I could see that she took any interest in any one *particularly* — that there was any symptom of her *having forgotten*. She is always cheery, always ready for everything — but, by the bye, have you heard when the trial is to take place? I hope soon, while we are over here. It would be much better that Grace should not be in England when it comes off. It would worry her, and rake up the past. Well! I hope you are coming out to us soon. We both want you awfully."

On the subject of invitations I may here give a characteristic note which Miss Ballinger received a few days after their arrival:

"My dear Miss Ballinger,—Will you and your brother give me the pleasure of your company at a blue dinner on the 28th of January, at 8 o'clock? I have selected this color, not because I am called a 'blue-stocking' by those who are amazed that a woman should know Greek, but to honor you and the country I adore. I shall never rest till Mr. Van Winkle is appointed Minister to Saint James's. I believe your Queen would be gratified by having at her court one woman representative alike of literature and fashion. Your true-blue friend,

"Corrina Van Winkle."

This dinner had not yet come off. In the meantime Mordaunt and Grace went to the Hurlstones'

box one night to hear "Siegfried." The box was a large one, on the grand tier, and besides the Hurlstone ladies and the Ballingers, there were Gunning and another of the *jeunesse dorée* of New York. Grace had heard that society was enthusiastic about Wagner's music, and that there was a great difficulty in obtaining a good opera-box, for which far larger sums were paid than are ever given in England. She innocently imagined that people went to listen to the music; she was undeceived. She had petitioned to go early, as she had never heard "Siegfried," and she and Mordaunt were in the box nearly an hour before the owners of it arrived. At first all was well. The upper boxes were crowded by Germans, who listened devoutly to every note; so did the unfashionable occupants of the stalls in their morning dress. But in the middle of the second act, the grand tier, which till then had been nearly empty, filled rapidly with smart ladies and their attendant cavaliers, and from that time onward a continuous fire of conversation was kept up, without even the semblance of any attention to the orchestra or the stage. That was the only part of the theatre to which opera-glasses seemed rarely to be directed. They raked every box, and the Hurlstones', by reason of its stranger guests, more persistently than any other. In vain Grace

fixed her eyes alternately on the book of the words and on the stage. In vain there were angry expostulations from the stalls of "Stop that talking!" Miss Hurlstone actually turned round deliberately and sat with her back to the house, talking to the Marquis de Tréfeuille and a number of other young men who flocked in and out; and in doing this, she was only following the example of others. To listen to the lightest French or Italian opera under such conditions would have been impossible; but when the music was Wagner's—music which demands the strain of every nerve, the tension of every intellectual faculty, to grasp the meaning of that tumult of sound, to follow and seize the floating gossamers of melody from the brambles of apparent discord—it was nothing short of exasperating. It became sound and fury, signifying nothing. Grace recalled the darkness, the death-like silence, of the theatre at Bayreuth. If Wagner could have risen from the grave to see himself so treated! She gave it up at last in despair, as Mrs. Hurlstone leaned forward for the fourth time (Gunning had been pouring his thin stream of small talk over her shoulder) and said,

"There is the Princess Lamperti just come in with George Ray—that fat woman in black, with yellow pompons and pearls. You know her his-

tory, poor thing! She was Miss Morse, of Baltimore, and fell in love with the prince at Rome. He married her for her money, and he behaved very ill. They were married more than ten years. There was never a word said against her, but after a miserable life she has at last divorced him on the ground of his desertion at his solicitation, they say, in order that he may marry some Spanish woman to whom he has long been devoted, and who is also very rich. Dreadful, isn't it? Every one feels very much for the poor princess."

Here Gunning, who had heard part of Mrs. Hurlstone's narrative, said,

"You know the prince, I suppose, Mrs. Hurlstone? Look up at the third box on the second tier. You'll see him there behind a very dark lady—I suppose Madame Moretto."

"You don't mean that he has had the effrontery to come here, when he knew his wife was in New York?"

"Why not? They're divorced, and Lamperti has cheek enough for anything. I don't think they are staying in New York City, however."

Mrs. Hurlstone, whose glass had been riveted on the box during this speech, exclaimed,

"It is the prince, sure enough! Well, I never heard anything like it—flying in the face of public

opinion like that! Of course, every one will cut him. And what a coarse-looking creature Madame Moretto is! What on earth brings them *here?*"

"I am sure I don't know. Perhaps it has something to do with the settlement of the princess's money."

"Why, it must all have been settled when she married. You don't suppose she would give him anything more? He has got enough out of her already. Besides, I thought this Madame Moretto was also very rich?"

"So I conclude. He wouldn't have married her without."

"He is, then, actually married to her."

"Why, certainly, or, if not married, going to be."

"Upon my honor! It is a pretty story altogether. We pride ourselves upon our society being very free from scandals; but if people *will* marry foreigners—" then she corrected herself—"I mean foreign princes, who are mere fortune-hunters, what can one expect?"

Grace, meantime, had looked at the rivals in this pitiful story, and had come to the conclusion that Madame Moretto's was no common face. She was handsome, though young no longer, but the strength of the countenance, more than its beauty,

made it remarkable. A woman, this, to exercise a fateful hold, probably, over any man on whom she had fastened — certainly over a weak one. As Grace looked at those eyes, burning like lamps in the depths of two dark caverns, at the proud and splendidly poised head and ample bust, and then at the figure and face of the deserted wife, she read at once how unequal the contest must have been. Coarse? Well, she might be coarse, but it was the coarse strength of Tintoretto, as compared with the faded feebleness of Guido.

The curtain had now fallen upon the second act, and Mordaunt, with the other men, had left the box, to visit their acquaintances and make room for those who wished to pay their respects to Mrs. Hurlstone and inspect the English beauty more closely. Among these was a powerfully built young man, of medium height, with a fine resolute face and a delightfully frank smile. His general bearing and ease of manner, which never touched the confines of familiarity—that snare of the underbred—would have distinguished him in any society. He was greeted with cordiality by mother and daughter, and introduced to Miss Ballinger as Mr. Caldwell. He repeated her name, as all Americans do, on being presented.

"Mr. Caldwell does not honor New York very much," explained Mrs. Hurlstone, with a smile.

"We spoil him so much here, whenever he comes, that he thinks it best to make himself precious."

"Quite true," said the young fellow, showing the whitest teeth in the world under his incipient black moustache. "It is only coming here very seldom that makes me tolerated, I know. I am a grub, an earth-worm, who is out of place among the butterflies."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Miss Hurlstone. "You know quite well that you despise us butterflies. You prefer being a grub in those horrid mines all the time, and won't come out of your chrysalis. It's too bad!"

"That is all very well, Miss Hurlstone, but how would the butterflies ever exist but for the state of grubdom? Perhaps I shall burst my chrysalis some day, and flutter up and be a giddy old butterfly, but I am afraid you will have nothing to say to me then."

"Nothing!" said the young lady, decisively; "if you will not when you may," and the battledore and shuttlecock of chaff went on, while Mrs. Hurlstone, who had been sweeping the house with her opera-glass, said to Grace,

"Who are the people whose box Sir Mordaunt is in?"

Grace felt sure Mrs. Hurlstone knew.

"Mrs. Flynn and Miss Clayton. Have you never met them?"

"Oh, I believe I have met them, but they are not in our set. I fancy they are from Kentucky."

"There is no objection to that, is there?" asked Grace, with apparent innocence. "If Kentucky can produce such pretty women, I congratulate Kentucky."

"Pretty, yes—but such style! You English, my dear Miss Ballinger, are so very odd. You take up people that we should never know! You do that all the time in England. We hear of such extraordinary people being received there. It does seem so strange to *us*."

Grace recognized some truth in what Mrs. Hurlstone said. Probably, if she were American, she would feel much as Mrs. Hurlstone did. But she felt sure these young women were quite harmless; they had amused her; in a certain way she had liked them; she was too loyal to give them up. So when Mrs. Hurlstone followed up her remark with, "Do tell me where you made Mrs. Flynn's acquaintance?" Grace replied, "At a dinner your friend, Mr. Sims, gave us at Delmonico's. Is there any reason why he should not have asked them?"

"Oh, no reason exactly—except that, as a man of the world, he ought to have known they were not the kind of people you ought to meet as

good specimens of New York society. I am sorry you should meet any but our best people."

Grace checked the question, "What are the best?—the richest?" which rose to her lips, and said,

"Mr. Sims thought we should be more entertained by meeting some American types, such as we have not seen in England, and he was right. Miss Clayton, especially, amused us both very much."

"We don't like our English friends to be *amused* in that way," said Mrs. Hurlstone, with trenchant emphasis.

"Dear Mrs. Hurlstone, if every one were alike, the world would be very dull. A little originality is so delightful. I want to see as many different types as I can in going through the States. I don't think the worse of people for not having the manners I have been used to. Their manners are good for *them*, as mine are for me."

"Forgive me for saying that that is all nonsense, Miss Ballinger. There is but one code of good manners, all the world over. You will go back to England, and quote these people, and say *that* is the way Americans behave. You know you will!"

"Some Americans—not all," replied Grace, calmly. "And why not? What is the use of

blinking the truth? There are differences—you can't deny it—and I want to see them all. The New-Englanders, about whom I have read so much, the warm Southerners, the wild Westerners, I know I shall find them all interesting in their different ways. I don't want only to see the smart conventional people. I have plenty of them at home."

Here some one entered the box, and Caldwell rose. Then, approaching Grace, he said,

"I believe my mother has taken the liberty of writing to you to-night, Miss Ballinger. She knew your father quite well when he was over here, and would like to make your acquaintance, but did not like to call without writing to explain why. We shall be only a short time in New York, but my mother hopes she may see you."

"Certainly. I shall be charmed. If she will appoint any hour I will be at home, or call on her."

"I will tell her. She thought, perhaps—but no. She has written, and I will not forestall her note. I shall have the pleasure of meeting you to-morrow night at Mr. Gunning's party. Good-night."

He bowed. She extended her hand. "Do not forget my message." Then, when he had left the box, she said to her hostess, "What a charm-

ing face that young man has! So frank, and manly, and straightforward. Who is he?"

"His mother's only son. The father died two years ago, and left great mining operations in a state that required very active and constant supervision. This boy—as he was then—undertook it all, worked like a slave, and showed great cleverness, great tact and judgment, I am told, in dealing with the men, who all adore him, I hear. He lives there, in Colorado, almost entirely, with his mother and a young sister, and resists all temptations to come to New York, unless business brings him. It is most extraordinary."

"It is admirable. And his mother—is she as nice as he?"

"I don't know her. She never goes into society here. She devotes herself to the education of her daughter, I believe, and to making a comfortable home for her son."

But the third act had now begun, and with it Mr. Gunning's fluid vacuity, which played with a mild spray down Miss Ballinger's back for the remainder of the evening.

CHAPTER VII

This was what the post brought Grace the next morning:

"My dear Miss Ballinger,*—I hope to call on you to-morrow; but I wish first to explain who I am. My husband was well acquainted with Sir Henry Ballinger, and he was our guest while in the United States. I am now a widow, living almost entirely in Colorado with my son, though I have a house here. I do not go into New York society, and fear I can be of little use to you during my short stay, but if you and your brother have a spare evening and would dine quietly with me I would try and get one or two pleasant friends to meet you. Later on, if you are going West, it would give me real pleasure to offer you and Sir Mordaunt such hospitality as we can in our wild home in the Rocky Mountains. Should you not be at home to-morrow, perhaps you will kindly write and say if I am fortunate enough

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* By the Americans it is considered more formal, by the English more familiar, to begin with "My." I am surprised to find my friend, Mr. Marion Crawford, asserting precisely the reverse in his "American Politician." I can only refer this divergence of opinion to the experience of the general reader.

to find you both disengaged any evening. All are the same to me. Yours sincerely,

"JOANNA CALDWELL."

"Jem" Gunning's party that night was a great success. He had done a good-natured thing by inviting Ferrars, whom he scarcely knew, but had interchanged a few words with on board ship, and had subsequently met at the Ballingers'. Ferrars was their friend; he had greatly admired Carmencita's public performances, and he had expressed a desire to see her in private, hence the invitation. Of course all the very "smartest" of New York society were there, including the Hurlstones and Mrs. Van Winkle, and besides these two or three artists justly supposed to be more in touch with the wayward, capricious dancer, who, it was said, required the enthusiasm of Bohemia to stimulate her efforts. Before a cold, fashionable circle she had been known to be a failure. They had arranged the beautiful picture-gallery added by the late Mr. Gunning to his fine mansion so that the dancer should have a little stage to herself at one end, backed by tall folding screens of Cordova leather. The electric light fell full upon this, while it was subdued in the rest of the gallery. The whole effect of the beautifully-dressed women, mostly young, not overcrowded, but seated in groups with their

cavaliers, against the rich background of pictures, was, in itself, a little *tableau.*

Before Carmencita arrived the Hungarian band played, and people wandered about, some to look at the pictures (which were all modern French), some to the refreshment-room adjoining. Then, when it was announced that the dancer and her accompanying band of guitars had arrived, the guests were arranged in semicircles of chairs; and, there being plenty of room for all, the men were not relegated to doorways, or flattened upright against the wall, as is generally the case in London. The band of guitars seated themselves, and began thrumming a *bolero* with wonderful spirit and a body of sound that was surprising from such poor instruments. In the midst of this a young woman entered from a side door. She was dressed in white and gold, and wore a white lace mantilla over her head. She was neither pretty nor ugly, a common type of Spaniard, and her movement as she walked was swaggering. She was greeted by a great clapping of hands, which the artists led. She acknowledged this by an awkward and, as it seemed to Grace, a surly salute. Then she sat down, with her feet apart, a fan in one hand, the other lying in her lap, the palm upwards. Her eyes looked dead, her whole face dull and expressionless. Could

this be Carmencita? Why, the woman was not even graceful! And the smart ladies who saw her for the first time whispered, "So badly dressed! Hair so blowzy, and frock gathered so fully over the hips that it makes them look ever so much too large!"

Ferrars had a chair immediately behind Grace.

"Is it possible that this is the dancer all the artist world rave about?" she asked.

"Wait."

"I can't fancy that any agility can compensate for the lack of grace and charm," she insisted.

"Wait," he again repeated. "If you are not a convert before ten minutes are over write me down an ass."

The guitars had ceased their little prelude. They were chattering to each other. The leader's head was turned away. He had not once glanced at Carmencita since she entered. Now, however, he revolved upon his stool, struck a chord, looking down as he screwed up one string; then raised his eyes. They met hers. It was like the falling of a spark upon some explosive substance. Her whole face was illuminated. She flung away her mantilla, and rose transformed, as the guitars struck up once more. The genius of her art had now hold of her, and went impatiently quivering through her frame. Her feet tapped the

ground; her arms and hands — those apathetic hands — were lifted with a sort of exultant passion; she drew herself proudly up, and her *bolero* began.

Considered merely as dancing, probably many of the spectators had witnessed more wonderful performances. It was the dramatic force, the vivid intensity of every movement, that distinguished it from any ordinary Terpsichorean feat. Without being what is understood as pantomimic, the little dance told its story as no dance of the kind has ever done before. When she sprang forward with that defiant audacity, bent, swayed, flung her body back till it seemed as though her head would touch the floor, her eyes appeared to flash fire, her hands and wrists in their delicate and flexible intonations played through the whole gamut of passionate emotion; they spoke with an eloquence that was not to be resisted. It was no longer a woman dancing—it was a creature possessed by some demoniac influence, struggling, supplicating, conquered, swept like a leaf before the wind in a series of gyrations so rapid and astounding that, when she sank to the earth, the spectators gasped with almost a sense of relief, amid the storm of applause that arose.

She smiled for the first time; then the light faded from her eyes, and she swaggered back to

her seat, the same awkward, lumpish-looking peasant she had been ere the flame had been ignited.

"Well? What do you say?" asked Ferrars, from behind Grace's shoulder.

"Nothing. She has taken away my breath."

The flood-gates were burst. "Tremendous! Astonishing! Immense! Did you ever see anything like that bend of body? There is no one can touch her!" and so on poured the tide of frothy admiration round the room.

"They see nothing but an exhibition of agility," said Ferrars. "You see something more than this, I am sure?"

"Yes." She waited a minute, then added, "It is a physical illustration of Owen Meredith's line, 'Genius does what it must. Talent does what it can.' She could no more help dancing as she does than a tornado can help blowing. I am not quite sure that I *like* a tornado. I think I prefer a gentler breeze. But one is carried away by the tempest while it lasts."

"And what do you want more? To be 'carried away,' even for a few minutes, and by a dancing-girl, is rare in life. I tell you that this creature has an individuality that is all her own. I have seen much more wonderful dancing in Spain, but never any that had this curious histrionic character."

"You have been in Spain much?"

"Yes, at one time. I hope Carmencita will sing some national airs presently. She never does so in public. I hear her singing and dancing together are extraordinary. Get our host to ask her."

There was a movement at the door at this moment, and a fat, fair woman, with a sweet smile, laden with jewels, entered. Gunning went forward with his mother, and then the magnificent George Ray strode down the room and greeted the new guest with effusion.

"Who is that? They are going to bring her up to you," said Ferrars.

"It is the Princess Lamperti. I dare say you have heard her story. She has just divorced her husband."

They approached, and the soft, cushiony-looking woman, with so complacent an expression that it was impossible to believe that her domestic sorrow had eaten deeply into her soul, was presented to Miss Ballinger. As the honored guest of the evening, whom every one was asked to meet, all presentations were made to her.

The princess began at once,

"I saw you last night at the opera, Miss Ballinger, and I was glad to think I was to meet you to-night. Your face was very *sympathique* to

me; I am very susceptible to fresh impressions —too much so. And you?" But she ran on without waiting for an answer. "How do you like Carmencita? Wonderful, isn't she? But, for me, I like something more—more *ondoyante* —more—more—how shall I say—ethereal?"

The princess, though pure American, had many foreign terms of speech, and was much addicted to foreign words.

"Certainly she is not ethereal," smiled Grace. "And yet she seems a sort of double-natured creature—a stupid peasant and—"

"A Paphian priestess!" murmured Mrs. Van Winkle, who stood near, with her head dressed like a cockatoo. "It is like the frenzied orgies that used to wind up some of their interesting rites! That intoxicating twirl of hers at the end —it is realism *in extremis*."

This sounded to Grace very like nonsense, but she was quick enough to respond,

"The *extremis* I suppose are her head and her toes? They were so mixed I could not quite tell for a moment which was which."

"You know," said the princess, "that the leader of the guitars is her husband? She adores him."

"Indeed? That is interesting. I saw that he lit her by a look, as some people, they say, light gas by the electricity in their fingers."

"I am one of the light-fingered gentry," laughed George Ray, fatuously. "In cold weather I can always do it, I am so strongly charged with electricity."

"You are such a large battery, such a mighty machine, that we are ablaze when you come near us," said Mrs. Van Winkle, with a satirical smile. Then she added, reflectively, as she opened and shut her fan, "Fancy being lit by your own husband! How curious! Though once, long ago, perhaps—" Then she broke off.

"Ah! They are so young—all is new!" sighed the princess. "One asks one's self, 'Will it continue?' Foreign natures are so *volages.* They know not what fidelity means. And, more than all, Italians and Spaniards—ah! They are a dreadful people, as I have good reason to know!"

Grace, generally ready with her tongue, felt rather at a loss what to say. Mrs. Van Winkle saved her.

"It must be very unexciting, dancing to your own husband. Herodias's daughter would not have won the Baptist's head under *those* circumstances. I feel like Marguerite de Valois, when she was thirsty, and drank a cup of cold water, and exclaimed, 'Ah! If it were only a sin!' The legitimate thing is always so very *fade.*"

It was astonishing the pains this lady took to

try and give a false impression of herself. But it was all thrown away on Grace.

"My aunt would have gratified Marguerite de Valois," she said. "She would have told her a cup of cold water *was* a sin—a deadly sin against hygienic laws. It is an *idée fixe* with her."

Then Mrs. Van Winkle moved on, bowing her cockatoo-like crest to right and left; and, as the princess had taken her seat, Grace turned to make some remark to Ferrars, but she saw to her surprise that he had left his chair, nor could she detect his head anywhere.

Carmencita now danced an *affondangodo*, followed by a *sequidillo*, with increasing energy, terminating by explosions similar to that which had roused such enthusiasm in her first dance.

Young Caldwell took the vacant chair behind Grace. After the usual questions, as to whether she cared for the dancing, he said,

"My mother was so delighted to get your note. She is glad that Sir Mordaunt and you can dine with us. Have you met Bagshot, our great lawyer and wit? We hope to get him and one or two others to meet you. But it will be quite a small party. You won't mind?"

"Oh! I shall like it so much better. Every one is most hospitable to us here, but I prefer small parties to large ones. Mr. Gunning," she

called to her host, who was passing, "do ask Carmeneita to sing while she danees. I am told that is the most charming thing she does."

"Why, yes! Michael Angelo Brown will get her. He speaks Spanish, you know, and understands how to tackle her."

He was going, when the princess stopped him.

"And after that, if you can induce her husband to danee with her — he is difficult to persuade, sometimes, but if you can only suceeed— it is eharming! so *entrain!* And there is something in their being husband and wife so — I don't know what! You understand? Ah!" She heaved a deep sigh.

The young man looked as though he did not in the least, but he hurried off to find the artist ambassador who should convey his request to both the performers. And, pleased with the fervor of her reeeption, the lady eonsented, so far as she and the song were coneerned. It was a long story in eouplets, threaded, so to speak, with dances. The preeise meaning of each verse required some knowledge of Spanish to understand, but her marvellous play of countenanee, and the variety of expression in that low, husky voice, whieh she *trod* with all the subtlety and delieacy of a great artist, told quite enough. This performance seemed to Graee to be even more remarka-

ble, and certainly more pleasing, than the preceding ones. When it was finished, she looked round once more, with her bright enthusiasm, to try and catch Mr. Ferrars's eye, but he was nowhere in sight. All she discovered was Mordaunt and Miss Hurlstone in a distant corner, where she had seen them more than an hour ago, engrossed in each other's conversation. Well! Dear Mordaunt was an out-and-out flirt; of course, it meant nothing with *him*. It was to be hoped the girl was equally case-hardened.

"Do you know, Miss Ballinger," said Caldwell. "I am afraid I like this singing better than the opera last night. I'm not worthy of that grand music. It's such an awful row."

"Which you tried to drown with the sound of your own voice, I dare say," laughed Grace. "Most people did. Now every one paid devout attention to Carmencita. That isn't fair to poor Wagner, is it?"

Here Gunning rushed up. "He has caved in at last! He has consented to dance with her—but only after a regular battle. It was that funny to watch 'em. Their goings on together were like a play, they were, but she has got round him. I say, Miss Ballinger, I want to know if you and your brother won't come out to Tuxedo on Saturday and stay till Monday, as my

guests. It's an awfully jolly place, and I'll get up a nice party—just the right set, you know—no outsiders—if you'll come."

"You are very good; but it is impossible. We are engaged."

"What? both days? Couldn't you come for one?"

"No. *I*, at least, am engaged both days. I can't answer for my brother."

And so, after the little dramatic dance of coquetry and pursuit and capture between the Spanish husband and wife was gone through, the evening came to an end.

CHAPTER VIII

The next morning Grace sat turning over the leaves of a book which had just been sent her. The elderly author had been presented to her the evening before, and had promptly sent her his "Souvenirs," which were said to be having a great sale, especially in the Far West, where its axioms of etiquette and records of high life in New York were accepted with unquestioning reverence. A smile played on the girl's face, culminating now and again in a burst of merriment as her eye fell on such passages as these:

"It is well to be in with the nobs, who are born to their position; but the support of the swells is more advantageous, for society is sustained and carried on by the swells!"

Grace fairly screamed when she read of some man who was supposed to have been in fashionable English life, that "He was *in* with all the sporting world—intimate with the *champion prize-fighter, the Queen's pages, Tattersall's, and others!*"

She had just come to this passage when there was a knock at her door, and in response to her "Come!" (in America the invitation is confined to that monosyllable), Mr. Ferrars was announced.

"Why did you disappear so suddenly last night?" asked Grace, with her usual indiscreet directness, as soon as they had shaken hands. "I don't believe you heard Carmencita sing, after all."

"No, I did not. There was some one there I did not wish to meet. I had to go. I told you New York society and I would never agree. It proved so last night. I shall not try the experiment again. I shall leave New York to-morrow."

"Is it not a pity to take life so very hard as you do?"

"It is life that took *me*."

"You strike me as treading very heavily on it. 'Glissez, et n'appuyez pas' is such a wise motto."

"I see you have Golightly's 'Souvenirs'"—he pointed to the book on her lap. "Perhaps you are right. I suppose the career of that veteran butterfly proves it. I suppose if I had been born like him I should be happier than I am."

"Grace opened the book, and read this passage aloud:

"'If you see a fossil of a man, shabbily dressed,

it is better to cross the street and avoid meeting him!' There is a fitness in such noble sentiments being expressed in this refined language. I fancy I hear you saying that!"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Golightly is the natural outcome of a society that is built solely upon wealth. I look upon that rubbish as the most salutary lesson our people could have of the depth of degradation to which a 'leader of society,' as he is called, may sink."

"Oh! but he is a joke, you know; ask any one. It is absurd to judge a whole community by one foolish man."

"I am glad you find the society to your taste," he returned, dryly. "By the bye, I have heard from Mrs. Courtly to-day. She asks if I know when you are likely to be in Boston, and will pay her a visit at her country place, Brackly."

"Mordaunt has made no plans for leaving New York at present. How long do you stay in Virginia?"

"I don't know. It depends. I shall not return to New York; but I *shall* return East shortly, and hope to be with Mrs. Courtly at the same time you are."

"I shall be very glad if you are." Then she added, with a smile, "You will not object to Boston society?"

"No, I shall not. Mrs. Courtly does not suffer fools gladly. You will not be dull in her house."

"I am never dull anywhere—certainly not here, where I have found plenty to interest and amuse me. I might say more than this, but I am afraid you would sneer."

"Pray go on. I won't sneer."

"I have found something to respect and to admire, which I do not find at home—in our best society. And that is, a much higher moral standard."

"How so? Not in public affairs? Not in railways? Not in the press? Not in Wall Street?"

"I know nothing about those things. I speak of what comes under my personal observation. I see that women, and even men, are tabooed about whom there is any open scandal. It is not so with us. Nothing short of divorce shuts the door against a woman of position who sins; and as to a man, nothing except cheating at cards seems to do so."

He rose, without reply, and went to the window. At the same moment, Mordaunt entered.

"Good-morning, Ferrars. Grace, I have a note from that good-natured chap, Gunning, enclosing a box for the circus, this afternoon. Will you come?"

"Is the box our very own, or is Mr. Gunning coming with friends?"

"He says he may drop in—but the box is ours, to fill as we like, only it's rather late to get any one."

"Will you come, Mr. Ferrars? And I will telephone to ask Mrs. Caldwell and her daughter."

Ferrars accepted; and so, a few minutes later, did the ladies. Soon after two o'clock the whole party, except Gunning, was established in the great arena, to witness Barnum's show of "Nero." The vast building was crowded. Grace, who now met the Caldwell ladies for the first time, was charmed with them. The mother's sweet, frank face, and the young girl's freshness and intelligence—an intelligence very different from "the needle-like sharpness which pricked and startled one," as Grace described it, in May Clayton—she was equally delighted with both. Doreen Caldwell was not yet seventeen. She gave the promise of being a very pretty woman; at present she was too thin, her face too narrow, and her eyes unduly large for the rest of the features. She was strangely quiet for an American, almost shy; but then her bringing up had been different from that of most of her countrywomen, without the constant excitement and restlessness which seem inseparable from a home education in most city households. She had an abundance of the national humor, quick perceptions, and a keen capacity for enjoyment; but she had not as yet—if

she ever would acquire—that particular attraction in the eyes of most English*men*, the spontaneous up-bubbling garrulity, which most English*women* call "a feverish desire to be prominent."

Mordaunt talked chiefly to the mother. Grace saw at once that the daughter did not particularly attract him—it was not this that he had come out into the wilderness to see. Beatrice Hurlstone's undisguised encouragement and capacity for flirtation treated as a fine art, or May Clayton's audacious drollery was much more to his taste. But Ferrars and Grace together drew Doreen out, and were entertained with the remarks of this child of nature, as yet *unblasée* by the glitter of such shows. A young man came in to visit Mrs. Caldwell, whose box he believed it to be. She introduced him to Grace as Mr. Alan Brown. He was evidently intimate with the family. The girl greeted him with a frank smile, and said,

"I am sure you have never seen anything better than *this* in Europe. Say, have you, now?"

"No," he answered. "Barnum takes the cake for shows. It isn't a very grand thing to take the cake for—but it's the best we have in the dramatic line."

This remark, and Mr. Brown's "English accent," gave Grace the key-note of the air which persecuted the young man's life. He had been

educated at Eton and Oxford, and had returned to business in New York, hating his present existence, and indisposed to find pleasure in the many pleasurable things his native land had to offer him.

"I am sorry for him," said Mrs. Caldwell, when he had left the box. "Alan is a very nice fellow in many ways, but his education has been a mistake. His father is very rich—dry-goods, you know—and this is his only son. As he naturally wishes him to continue the business, it was not fair to bring him up with all the tastes and habits of your leisure class in England. It was his mother's fault. He hates business, and he hates New York."

Gunning entered just then, and was presented to Mrs. Caldwell.

"You live near the Rockies, don't you? I shot six bears there last year. It was great sport. I was under canvas. But to live there—Caldwell must find it awfully slow."

"My son has work there, and he likes the life. He enjoys New York for a short time, but he would soon tire of doing nothing. He told me what a charming party you had last night," she added.

"Why, yes. It was a success, I think—I hope you thought it went off well, Miss Ballinger? Oh! Thank you. It's awfully good of you to say

so. Every one was so delighted to meet you—and Sir Mordaunt. Sorry you can't come to Tuxedo. Quite a number of people are going there on Saturday. You are going to the ball to-night, of course? And have you cards for the Assembly Ball next week? That's all right. Talking of cards, I wish you'd tell me which is the correct thing in London, to print your address on the right-hand or the left-hand corner of your card? 'Cause it's important to know."

"I am afraid I can't tell you. I never thought about it."

"Well, now, that's curious. We've had quite a dispute about it here. I say, don't you want to know who is in the third box from here—that handsome woman in gray? She's Otero, the rival of Carmencita—and a sight better-looking too—but she's not the fashion like the other is. Fashion is everything, after all, ain't it? This circus is full all the time. Everybody comes here, not that they care for it very much, but it's the thing. Pity it's so big, one can't see across the house well." Here he took up his glass. "Why! I declare, there's Miss Planter and her mother! They must have arrived from Pittsburgh yesterday. If I'd known it, I'd have asked her last night. Didn't you meet her in London? Why, she made quite a stir there—went into first-rate

society, and refused a lord, I'm told. You must be introduced, Sir Mordaunt. She is a real belle, Clare Planter is. If you like to come right away now, I'll present you."

So Ballinger rose, laughing, and the young men left the box. On his return, just before the end of the performance, Mordaunt reported that the young lady was charming, the prettiest girl he had seen since he landed, lots to say for herself, and very nice. "A sort of girl you'll like, Grace. Been in England, too."

Grace knew what that meant. They trooped out of the theatre, Grace on Gunning's arm, Mrs. Caldwell on Sir Mordaunt's. Doreen had a double body-guard: Ferrars, whose arm she took on one side, and Alan Brown, who had appeared again just as they were leaving, on the other. As they reached the crowded entrance Grace saw a sallow foreigner in front of them, with a lady on his arm. The lady turned her head—the face was an unforgetable one ; it was that of Madame Moretto. There was a block at the door, of people waiting for their carriages, for it was raining.

"Where is Doreen? I do not see her," said Mrs. Caldwell ; but a moment later the girl appeared on Mr. Brown's arm. Then, "What have you done with Mr. Ferrars? I thought you were with him?"

"So I was, mother, but he suddenly dropped my arm, and asked me to excuse him, and let Alan take me to the carriage. He looked so odd, quite ill, I thought."

"Certainly Mr. Ferrars is not fit for New York society," thought Grace to herself. "I don't believe he was ill a bit. It was one of his strange vagaries."

The ball that night, at one of the greatest and most exclusive houses in New York, will be best described in an extract from Grace's letter to her aunt, written the following day. It tells better than I could the fresh impressions made upon her receptive nature by the scene, the habits, and the actors in that drama of the New World in which she was now taking part.

"*Thursday, January 24th.*

"We were last night at Mrs. Thorly's ball. Everything was very splendid, the house, the dresses, the diamonds, the flowers, everything except the introduction to the *fête*, by which I mean that the guests, on arrival, had to struggle through the brilliant crowd in order to reach the staircase, and up to the cloak-room on the first floor. This strange anomaly, I am told, is almost universal here. It was snowing, and every one wore 'gums,' to protect their thin shoes. The men were, naturally, muffled in ulsters; the women swathed in veils and fur cloaks. Anything more incongruous than this unsightly procession, forcing its way through the bare shoulders and wreathed heads of

those who had already discarded their wraps and were scanning each new arrival, can hardly be imagined. The ordeal of running the gauntlet through this crowd was most disagreeable to me. I should not have minded so much if I had been impenetrably veiled, as most of the women were; but I felt as if the snow-flakes were in my hair, and my cheeks a-flame, as I heard people whisper, 'That's the English girl, you know.' When I had smoothed my ruffled feathers, I descended with Mordy, and we made our way to Mrs. Thorly, who received me most graciously. As I looked round I was really dazzled by the *general*—more than the particular—beauty of the women, and specially by their toilettes. No one of them, perhaps, was really beautiful; but they were nearly all pretty, and, as a whole, better dressed than any collection of girls I ever saw. I had on that frock of Mrs. Mason's, which I had only worn once at Grosvenor House; and I flattered myself I looked so smart till I saw how much fresher all the dresses round me were. Well, it didn't much signify. There was a time when I should have been vexed, but now I don't much care. The married women's diamonds were amazing; many of them were tiaras, which I understand is an importation from England much reprehended by some. 'What business have republicans with crowns?' a man said to me. I replied that republicans had taken them off so many heads that I did not suppose they attached any importance to them as the insignia of royalty. I preferred walking about and watching the dancers to dancing much. The young men were indulgent with me; they showed me everything, told me who every one was, and were very nice and kind. Mordy divided his attention between Miss Hurlstone—who is certainly much

taken with him—and a Miss Planter, a new beauty just arrived. She was the handsomest girl there, and I admire her more than any one I have seen. There is character in her fine, fearless eyes, her well-cut mouth, her firm, erect carriage. She is more like a married woman than a girl, and her very costly attire strengthened this impression. Mordy introduced us. Her voice is peculiarly pleasant, so rich and low, very unlike most of the voices here. She has a few American turns of speech (of which she is quite unconscious, of course, for her great desire, I am told, is to be thought English), but no twang, not the faintest suspicion of one. She talked of all the people she had known in London with a familiarity which was amusing. An English girl would have made a mess of it; but adaptability is essentially an American feature. She had fallen into these people's lives, for the time being, so completely that she may be said to have assimilated them. Of course, she is a flirt; all girls here are. On the other hand, married women are *not;* husbands would never stand their wives 'carrying on' as they do all over the continent of Europe, including England. We theorize about morality; but the variable laws which decree how much people may sin before they are excluded from society are much more lax with us than in New York.

"The supper was most picturesque. At a given moment any quantity of little tables were brought in by numberless servants and scattered through the rooms, and at these the whole of the guests seated themselves and were served. The feast lasted quite an hour, during which there was an entire cessation from dancing. To me individually this was a trial, for I had promised Mr. Gunning to go to supper with him, believing it would be an affair of ten minutes

—I scarcely touch supper, as you know. Instead of that, I found myself wedged between him and a man I did not know; and Mr. Gunning was absurd enough, and tactless enough, to choose this moment to propose to me. Can you imagine a more irritating position? No escape. When I declined the honor he did me, hot cutlets were being handed over my shoulder; and there I had to sit while quails and lobster salads, creams and ices, came in slow succession, and still he poured out his persistent nonsense! I was so angry; I could have boxed his ears.

"*January 25th.*—Miss Hurlstone drove me out this morning in her pony-carriage. Of course, we discussed the ball, but had not got very far when she turned round and asked if I admired Miss Planter. I replied, 'Yes, very much.' 'So does your brother,' she remarked. Then, after a pause, 'Does he confide in you much?' I was rather taken aback. 'He does sometimes, I suppose, not always.' 'Has he ever spoken to you of me?' 'Yes, two or three times.' 'Do you think he likes me?' 'Certainly; why should he talk to you otherwise? But Mordaunt is a dreadful flirt. You mustn't take anything he says seriously, especially *here*, where he has been told you all expect to be flirted with, and attach no importance to it.' 'Well,' she said, as she flicked her ponies, 'if he thinks we all take it like that, he is mistaken—and I suppose, therefore, the less I see of him the better, for I never met any one I liked so much. That is just the truth, Miss Ballinger, and, until last night, I fancied— But when I saw how he was carrying on with that Planter girl—they are just nobodies, coals, or tallow, or something from Pittsburgh—I was so hurt I could have cried. I suppose you think it very undignified of me to own it? Mamma would be very angry if she knew that I said so; but it is

the truth!' What could I say? I tried to console her by the assurance that Mordaunt was too *volage* to settle down with Miss Planter or Miss any one else just at present; and though I doubt if this carried much weight with it, the girl's worldly common-sense, so at variance, according to our ideas, with this expansiveness of sentiment, stopped her from saying more. I have given you the dialogue, as nearly as I can, in the very words used, because its directness—the way in which she went straight to her point without hesitation—struck me as very characteristic of the nation. She wanted to learn something, and she learned it. Most English girls would have died sooner than have made that confession. As to Mordy, of course, none of these flirtations mean anything; but he will be burnt some day if he goes on playing with fire. Miss Planter is really far above the common run. As I looked at Miss Hurlstone's pretty face, and recalled the other's fine classical head, I could not be surprised at Mordy's transference of his admiration. After all, if American girls choose to flirt in this way, and encourage men without any intention of marrying them, they must take the consequences if *they* are sometimes the ones to suffer. I cannot pity Miss Hurlstone very much. Some of the men here I like greatly. The women are superior in superficial qualities; they have more leisure to give to them. But among the men not devoted solely to money-making, among those who aim at raising the intellectual tone of the people, I have met some well worth cultivating. Mordy's friend, Mr. Reid, you would like—a shrewd head for business, with brains to spare for other things.

"But I must stop. Good-night. We are waiting anxiously to hear when you think you may be able to join us."

CHAPTER IX

Quintin Ferrars was gone, and Miss Ballinger acknowledged to herself that she missed his visits greatly. His conversation, it is true, aroused her combativeness as no one else's did; but then, no one interested, and at the same time puzzled her, as did this strange man. It cannot be said that she thought much of him when alone, for her mind was still engrossed with the image of a very different person, between whom and herself a gulf, wider than the Atlantic, had been fixed. But in the human procession that passed daily before her eyes, no figure was as vivid as that of Ferrars, none that she could have missed as she did his. Under no circumstances could she have loved this man—his nature was not heroic. And the only men who had exercised, or could by any possibility ever exercise, an influence on her life, had, whether rightly or wrongly, seemed to her as heroes. For Quintin Ferrars she felt very sorry, but no respect. His existence appeared to be a wasted one. She admired his intellectual capac-

ity; his very strangeness had a certain attraction for her; the knowledge that there was some real cause for his unhappiness, though she was ignorant of that cause, all made him an interesting person in her eyes. But there her feeling for him stopped. The more she studied his character, the more she felt that there was something which evaded her. He had shirked a duty; he had not fallen in a fair stand-up fight with life—he almost acknowledged as much—and it is not of such stuff that heroes are made.

But Grace Ballinger was a woman, and not above a woman's weaknesses. She liked appreciation—admiration—call it what you will; and, though possessed of no craving to have a man always at her feet, the constant occupation—it might almost be called the devotion—of a clever and original one was certainly agreeable to her. She did not even now realize all that this meant to Ferrars. He sought her as he did no one else; but his reticence as to his own feelings on every personal subject blinded her to the fact that she was growing to be of paramount importance in his scheme for the future. They had now been nearly a month in New York, and had met almost daily, yet it never occurred to her to regard his assiduity in a very serious light. Her view of it was that he found an intellectual pleasure in

her society, nothing more. He was too self-absorbed in brooding over past troubles to feel any longer a passionate interest in any one. Mordaunt, standing further off, discovered what she did not. We cannot see the object accurately that is held too close to our eyes.

And so it came to pass that when he bade her good-by, with a certain rigidity and difficulty of utterance, she expressed her sorrow at his departure with more than her usual frankness.

"I am so sorry you are going. I hope you will try and be at Brackly when we are there."

"Yes. You may depend on that. Mrs. Courtly will write to me; she has promised."

"I fancy we shall not be there beyond the middle of February, and I think, from what my brother said yesterday, he means to go to Boston straight from here."

Mordaunt had dropped something more than this, to wit—that Miss Planter was a friend of Mrs. Courtly's, and was going to stay at Brackly in February. But Grace did not give this reason for the faith that was in her as regarded her brother's movements.

"I hope you are going to do your duty as a good American citizen," she said, smiling, as she shook his hand.

"I am going to fulfil the law, at all events," he returned, grimly. And then he departed.

What an odd man he was, to be sure! How difficult it was to understand him! Perhaps the explanation of it was that the lens of his mental photographic apparatus was ill-adjusted: not only were the shadows too black, the objects themselves were distorted; and the nearer they stood in relation to him, the more they were out of focus.

Mrs. Van Winkle's party that evening was no compromise. She had nailed her colors fast to the staff of fashion; and literature, save in her own fair person, was unrepresented. Mr. Sims, who stood on the borderland of the two worlds, and the young painter, Michael Angelo Brown, at present engaged on a portrait of Mrs. Van Winkle in the character of Diana, with a crescent on her head and a bow in her hand—these were the pinches of salt thrown in to flavor the social compound, with a regard to Miss Ballinger's appetite for something stronger than a fashionable *soufflé*. It is true that bright creature, Mrs. Siebel, was of the party, whose shrewd perceptions and ebullient sense of fun irradiated any circle. But then, in Mrs. Van Winkle's eyes, she was first of all a woman of fashion; only a delightful human being afterwards. For Sir Mordaunt, Mrs. Van Winkle felt herself to be feast enough; but with the happy confidence of a woman who fears no rivalry, she had selected two pretty units of

the "Four Hundred" to add brilliancy to the entertainment. She looked unusually well herself, in pale blue velvet, with powdered hair, and pearls. When Grace remarked how much they became her, she whispered,

"Diamonds are getting so vulgar! Look at the poor dear princess. She is always like a badly-made *blanc-mange*, but to-night she looks as if she had been upset in a jeweller's window, and had got mixed up with the diamonds."

For the Princess Lamperti's ample white form was resplendent with jewels, two necklaces defining a waist which it would have taken a life-guardsman to encircle. Not wholly unlike a life-guardsman was Mr. George Ray, who was on her left, while the host sat between her and Miss Ballinger. He was a well-favored gentleman of fifty, with extremely good manners, and not much besides. The dinner was perfect, and the ingenuity with which it was *colored* gave rise to some amusement, of the thin, obvious kind which any one can enjoy. The table was covered with forget-me-nots growing out of moss, procured for Mrs. Van Winkle with infinite difficulty at this season. The candle-shades were pale blue; the bills of fare were printed, as were the names of the guests, on pale blue cards. Of course the *menu* began with Blue Point oysters. Then there

was a *Potage à la Mazarin*, having an occult reference to the tint associated with the cardinal of that name. This was followed by *Truites au bleu*, and what Mrs. Van Winkle had christened "True-blue Fillets of Salmon." After that there came a compote of "blue-rock pigeons," and I know not what other birds of the air, and *entrées* of meat which had been re-christened for the nonce. In the second course there was a jelly of blueberries, I remember, and finally the *menu* closed with a *fondu au cordon bleu.*

On the other side of Grace was Mr. Sims. He fired his little shots alternately at the hostess, the princess, and other ladies across the table, breaking up the *têtes-à-têtes* with the laughter which followed his assaults.

"I never saw so becoming a 'fit of the blues' as your dress, Mrs. Van Winkle," he declared.

"It is quite too sweet of you to say so; you don't generally pay compliments."

"He would not have done so now but for the temptation of the pun," laughed Mrs. Siebel. "I wonder he did not get in something about 'blue stockings.'"

"It was an oversight," he replied, merrily. "Couldn't you have concocted a dish '*au bas-bleu*,' Mrs. Van Winkle?"

"You don't suppose I did not think of it? My

avoidance of that opprobrious term was deliberate. Literary women never understand the art of eating; I am the exception. With me it is a *fine* art. Observe the combination in this *menu*. The sequence of flavors is as delicately felt as the juxtaposition of colors on Titian's canvases."

"You mean it is a 'symphony in blue'?"

"Exactly. You think you are making an epigram, Mr. Sims. You are uttering the simple truth. There are no harsh discords here. You are led up from one dish to another; you may eat straight through this dinner. You will find that all the surprises *resolve* themselves, like the surprises in harmony."

"Great Scot!" cried Mr. Sims. "I had no idea eating was allied to music, as well as to painting! It only remains to drag in poetry."

"Oh!" interposed Grace, "she requires no dragging. Does not she step in of her own accord? From Homer downwards all the grand, healthy old poets take delight in the pleasures of the table. It is only the morbid, attenuated school that feed on rose-leaves."

"That reminds me of the 'Souls,' that exclusive society of æsthetes in London we have heard so much about," said Mrs. Van Winkle. "Are you a 'Soul,' Miss Ballinger?"

Grace laughed. "I am no*body*, but I am not a 'Soul'."

"I should like to be one," sighed her hostess. "But must I abandon all the pleasures of the flesh to be admitted to this spiritual community?"

"No; some female 'Souls' are very corporeally active—a sort of 'Walkyre'—spirits on horseback. They ride; they hunt."

"In couples?" asked the hostess, with an air of infantine innocence.

"Only misanthropes like doing things alone," returned Grace, with a smile. "I am sure I don't."

"Nor I!" cried Mrs. Siebel.

"My dear, who is prepared to contradict you?" Mrs. Van Winkle played with a morsel of jelly on the end of her fork, as she spoke. "We all love humanity too much. Yes, I wish I were a 'Soul'!"

"Well!" said Sims, reflectively, with a funny twitch of his mouth, "you fence beautifully, and I have seen you dance a *pas seul*—two recommendations, I believe, to Souldom." Then, turning to the large lady, who certainly looked as if she could neither fence nor dance a *pas seul*, he continued, "And you, princess, what do *you* say? Do you feel like being a 'Soul'?"

The princess paused, and looked grave, before she replied,

"I don't quite know what it all means, Mr.

Sims; but if it has anything to do with ghosts, and visions, and second sight, I have the best right to join the society, for I am very *croyante.* I have had *such* experiences! Ah!"

"Do tell us about them."

"A ghost story first hand! How delightful!" said several people round the table.

"Not now, not while we are at table," returned the princess. "Perhaps by and by." And no one had the bad taste to insist further.

But Mrs. Van Winkle, who, no matter at what cost, was never content to play second fiddle, here observed,

"I once saw a ghost—or what I took to be a ghost—in St. Petersburg, in the dusk of the evening, in my room. I was dreadfully frightened. It proved to be a Russian; those foreigners are so very enterprising. He had long shown his admiration. He now sprang at me with a drawn sword in his hand. Happily, I was near the bell, or it might have been very awkward."

"And what became of the ghost?" asked Mordaunt, biting his lips. "Did you have him arrested?"

"Oh, no, I felt too much compassion for him, poor man! Indeed, I was very much touched. There is so little romance in this present day."

"What a charming, comprehensive word that

is, my dear Mrs. Van Winkle!" laughed Sims. "It includes murder, highway robbery, and now, I see, other little offences!"

A good deal of amusement was caused by this peculiar revelation, and one can only imagine the narrator intended that such should be the result. I am confident she rarely expected to be taken seriously. If she could shock or astonish her audience by her utterances she was satisfied. She had certainly driven the ghosts from the field.

But when dinner was over, and the men had rejoined the ladies in that bower of embroideries and perfume where Mrs. Van Winkle received her guests, lapped in languorous repose on satin cushions, and no one's face could be distinguished under the dim, irreligious light of silk-shrouded lamps, then the narrator of abnormal experiences, being pressed by her hostess, began, without reluctance, without a shadow of hesitation,

"It will be five years ago next May, I was in Rome and alone. The prince had left me to go to Palermo—on business, as he said. I had only been married three years at this time, and though I cannot say I was happy, no!—I still loved my husband. I was not completely *desillusionnée*. I knew he was *volage*, but I had no reason to suspect that he was quite—how do you say?—estranged from me. I gave him a liberal allow-

ance, over and above what had been settled on him at our marriage, and he always treated me with, well—with respect. He was not *passionné*, no—but I thought, *enfin*, I thought it was not his nature. Well! he went to Palermo, and I had a letter from him in the course of a few days, saying his business was advancing favorably, though slowly. He would probably be detained longer than he expected. I was not anxious, I was not uneasy about him—why should I be?—when I went to bed that night. That made my dream the more extraordinary, *tout à fait saisissante*. I saw him in a garden, under a tree. Beside him stood a dark woman, whose face was quite distinct. I could have drawn it. She gave him some fruit."

"Were they in the condition of Adam and Eve?" murmured Mrs. Van Winkle, from her pile of satin cushions.

"Oh, no," continued the princess, gravely, "she had on a yellow gown, trimmed with *broderie Anglaise*. I can see it now! He was dressed in gray tweed. He ate the fruit she gave him, and then gradually, gradually, I saw his face change color, and the expression, ah! *il avait un air méchant*. I had never seen him look like that before—he was almost green, his features hideously distorted. He fell down at her feet, and I knew that she had poisoned him. I woke with a scream!"

"No wonder. You must yourself have eaten something that disagreed with you, princess!" said Sims.

She shook her head. "No, but my dream disagreed with me! Ah! I was quite *boulversée*, I could not sleep again, and still I saw them distinctly before me. In the morning I rang for my maid, and said I would start for Palermo. My family tried to dissuade me from following my husband, but I said I knew some misfortune had happened to him, or would happen, if I did not go. What I had dreamed was a *presentiment;* and so persuaded of this was I, that when I reached Naples, though a great hurricane was blowing, and I am a dreadful sailor—*je souffre horriblement*—I insisted on embarking. They told me the steamer was a very bad one, and really not fit to put to sea in such weather, but I was firm. *Que voulez vous?* I was possessed with the idea. We had a terrible passage, but at last we reached Palermo, and I drove to the Hôtel des Palmes. I was dreadfully nervous; I scarcely dared ask after my husband, but they told me he was quite well—he was in the garden, so I followed him. I could not rest till I had seen, with my own eyes, that he did not look as he had done in my dream. I found him under a tree, a palm-tree, in his gray tweed suit, seated beside a bru-

nette dressed in yellow—that Madame Moretto, *who has poisoned his life ever since!*"

"And does that account for his looking as he does — so very unwholesome—princess?" asked Mrs. Van Winkle.

"Ah! I saw a change in that minute, when he looked up and perceived me. Ah! he turned green, just as I had seen him in my dream—*d'un ton verdâtre*—and his expression, it was terrible! That was the beginning of all my trouble, which lasted nearly five years, before I consented to divorce him. He went to live in Paris, and, having no Italian property, became a French subject. This enabled me to do so. Have I not reason, *ma chere*, to believe in spiritual warnings, second sight, and—and so on?"

Of course every one declared that it was the most interesting and remarkable instance of spiritual premonition that he or she had ever heard, direct from the fountain-head. Only Mr. Sims made a captious remark, to the effect that the vision seemed to have been quite useless—it had resulted in the princess being very seasick, and very unhappy some time before she need have been; otherwise, the warning had produced no effect, one way or the other.

Grace listened to all this in silence. It was amazing to her that any one could bring herself

to relate deliberately so painful an episode in her past, to hand it over, as it were, for analysis to a cold and curious circle, eager, indeed, for "some new thing," but not even pretending to feel any warm sympathy for the lady's domestic woes. It confirmed Grace in the opinion that those woes could not be very deep-seated. No doubt this soft feather-bed of a woman had suffered to some extent, but not to the extent which she herself believed — not as a proud, passionate, sensitive nature would have suffered in like circumstances. To such a one it would have been impossible to make them the subject of after-dinner discussion, in a circle of the merest acquaintance.

She was at some distance from the princess, and Madame Siebel, who sat near her, whispered,

"You can take a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink. He was dead sick of his wife five years ago, so she would have done better to set him free then."

"In England we don't think that sort of millstone should be so easily slipped off the neck," returned Grace, half seriously and half playfully. "She has only just divorced him, then?"

"Only just. He is waiting now, I believe, for Madame Moretto to divorce *her* husband in order to marry her."

"Good gracious! Has *she* got a husband also?

And what is the plea in *her* case?—or is it the husband who divorces *her!*"

"No. He is passive, I am told, in the matter. She pleads desertion, though of course that is all nonsense, for she is ever so rich, and left him years ago. The curious thing is, no one knew she had a husband until the prince was free to marry her. Then it came out she had been clandestinely married to some American, who had separated from her, when he discovered the sort of woman she was."

"Well! I must say these divorces by mutual consent seem very easily obtained in your country."

"Yes, if you are in the right State. I don't mean state of mind or body—I mean if you go and live for six months in a State where it is the law. Madame Moretto has come over here expressly for that purpose, and is living in Rhode Island, I am told, where divorce is made easy. It is not so in New York."

"But I have seen her here twice?"

"Oh! they have only been over for the day. It is a funny story, isn't it?—this sort of double game of chess. To make it complete, the American ought now to marry the princess."

"I should think she had had enough of matrimony."

"Oh, dear, no. She is just the woman to marry again. A husband is a luxury that sort of woman cannot forego. I shouldn't wonder if George Ray the Third were the fortunate man."

"That young Adonis? Do you mean that he—? Oh! impossible!"

"Impossible that he should propose? Not at all. He is awfully hard up. The only gold, I believe, he possesses is in his teeth." Here she laughed merrily. "Sometimes I think we take a pride in the amount of gold we stuff into our mouths. Talk about the gold-fields, I will back a fashionable churchyard to beat them as a mine of wealth."

Grace could not help laughing.

"I heard of a man who had a front tooth stuffed with a diamond, but I didn't believe it."

"Why not? Young men addicted to precious stones have so few opportunities of displaying them. If George Ray the Third marries the princess, I'll suggest to him that he should wear one of hers, instead of that lump of gold, in his eye-tooth."

The princess here rose. It was time to go to the assembly, of which she was a patroness, and whither nearly all the party present were bound.

CHAPTER X

Mordaunt Ballinger's luncheons at the Lawyers' Club, and his introductions to various magnates of the money-market, had led to his mind being tossed and buffeted on a sea of railroads, and mines, and joint-stock companies, until it had settled — as much from exhaustion, perhaps, as anything — on "real estate" in one of the rapidly rising cities of the Far West. This seemed as safe an investment, to bring in a large return for his money, as he could find. He felt sure Mrs. Frampton would think so. Still, as his aunt, whose acuteness in money matters he regarded with an almost superstitious trust, not wholly unmixed with dread, was to join them in the course of a few weeks, the young man resolved to defer the purchase of the shares offered him until he could visit Pueblo, and investigate on the spot the condition and prospects of the estate in question.

He came into his sister's room, a morning or two after the Van Winkle dinner, holding an open letter in his hand.

"I've heard from Aunt Su. She has got my letter, and seems in an awful stew about my investing money here. Well, I wrote yesterday to tell her I should do nothing till she came. She thinks she can sail the middle of February, and join us in Boston. By the bye, have you written to Mrs. Courtly?"

"No. I was waiting for you to tell me what time to propose to go to her. I suppose we shall only be there a few days before we go to Boston?"

"Well, that depends. I believe the Planters are going to her next week. We may as well offer ourselves at the same time."

Grace smiled.

"Certainly." Then, with a malicious glance into her brother's face, "Perhaps Mrs. Courtly would invite Miss Hurlstone, too, if I mentioned her. They are friends, I know."

"Well, don't mention her, then. She is a very nice girl, and all that, but—I'd rather she didn't come."

He stood near the table where his sister was writing as he said this. Then he took up a pen, and flung it down, fidgeted first on one leg, then on the other, finally walked to the window, still with Mrs. Frampton's letter in his hand, and remained there silent, with his back to Grace, for

several minutes. She knew him too well not to see there was something on his mind—something which he desired to say to her, and yet found it difficult to express. She thought, not without a twinge of apprehension, of the various ladies to whom he had paid attention here. Could it be that he had entangled himself, more or less, with one of these? Her mind so little anticipated what was coming that she started and flushed when he said,

"There's something else in Aunt Su's letter which I think you ought to know, Grace. In fact, she says I'm to tell you. Because you're sure to hear of it sooner or later. People are full of it. There's fresh evidence against Lawrence."

Her face hardened. She closed her lips tight for a moment, and in her clear blue eyes there was a momentary flash, as she said, quickly,

"What is it?"

"They've found the draft of another will, dated some years back, by which his uncle left the bulk of his fortune to his other nephew, Giles Tracy, and only ten thousand pounds to Ivor Lawrence."

"You call that evidence against him? What does that prove?" she asked, hotly.

"It only proves that before Ivor got the influence over his uncle which he exercised latterly,

the old chap meant to leave his estates not to his sister's son, but to his brother's son, as was natural, and as it was understood he would do."

"Understood by whom? By Mr. Giles Tracy, I suppose, who took to gambling on the strength of this prospective fortune! And why was it 'natural,' pray, that a man who had made—not inherited—his large fortune, like old Mr. Tracy, should leave it to a spendthrift, a *vautrien*, instead of to a clever rising barrister like his other nephew, whose character was universally respected?"

"Well, it isn't universally respected now, Grace."

"The more shame for those who are ready to believe any foul accusation on such evidence!" Her cheeks were aflame, and her voice shook as she spoke. "Evidence? It is too childish to call this evidence. According to your own showing, all it proves is that the old man once—before he knew how young Tracy would turn out—meant to make him his heir. He discovered in time the comparative worth of both his nephews."

"You forget there is a lot of cumulative evidence against Ivor before: his bringing a lawyer, who happens to have died since, to his uncle's bedside when he was dying—young Tracy's being refused admittance to his uncle—"

"Because the old man could not endure the sight of him latterly. Every one knows that he refused repeatedly to see him; and those who had heard him speak of his nephew during the last year or two were amazed to find that he had left him even so much as twenty thousand pounds."

Mordaunt shrugged his shoulders.

"The signature of the will is disputed, as you know."

An ejaculation indicative of intense scorn burst from his sister's lips.

"So he is to be accused of forgery. I wonder they don't add murder to the charge! Has the trial begun?"

"No, it has been again deferred."

She was silent for a moment, leaning her head upon her left hand, while with a pen in the right she traced some scrolls upon the note-paper before her.

"Poor Mr. Lawrence!" she said, at last. "I have a great mind to write to him."

"Good God! You wouldn't dream of doing anything so undignified, so outrageous, after his behavior to you, Grace? A fellow who runs after you for months so that half the world believes you are engaged to him, and that he is only waiting till he is rich enough to marry, and who, when he inherits this big fortune, turns his

back and never comes near you again—and you would actually demean yourself to write to him?"

Strange to say, now that the discussion had entered upon personal grounds, the young lady had comparatively regained her composure. Still, it was not without an effort that she said,

"Mr. Lawrence and I are very good friends, and I hope we shall always remain so. We never have been, and, of course, never shall be, anything more. I see no reason why I should not write and assure him that there is one person who believes in him if all the verdicts in the world went against him; if the whole of London cut him dead, it would make no difference to me. I know him to be a perfectly honorable, truthful, noble character. He is peculiar; there are some very rugged knots in him which you and Aunt Su, particularly Aunt Su, could never understand. And you don't understand him now. You think, supposing that he cared for me, which of course he never did, that he should have proposed when he found himself with ten thousand pounds a year. That is the last thing he would do with this accusation, this cloud over his head. He might have done so as a poor barrister, but never as one whose good name was tainted. I don't say he is right in avoiding us as he has done; I think, on the contrary, he is quite wrong.

But I should not be afraid of his misunderstanding me if I wrote to him. I think he would do justice to my motives, and thank me."

"All the same, Grace, I do hope to goodness you won't. Men of the world are not used to such high-flown sentiments. And it's so very like throwing yourself at the head of a cad, who—"

"None of that, Mordy, please, or I must ask you to leave the room." She spoke now with more excitement. "We have gone through all the string of opprobrious epithets at your command before, you know. They produce no effect on me—yes, they do. They make me feel very irritable with you. So, like a dear, drop it, please, and if you mention Mr. Lawrence—I have no objection whatever to your mentioning him—do so respectfully, as my friend."

He felt there was nothing more to be said. He had expended all his ammunition—retreat alone remained for him. But when the door was closed behind her brother, the girl's fortitude and pride broke down. She laid her head between her hands, and the hot tears of wounded love and disappointment coursed down her cheeks and fell on the note-paper upon which her pen had traced a confusion of curves and circles. Why had he not spoken to her when he was a struggling barrister? Was it because of her aunt, her brother?

Was it by reason of false pride? That he had pride, of an unreasoning, indomitable kind, allied to the obstinacy which was so marked a feature of his character, she knew well. But this should not have been enough to have kept him silent if he cared for her. And unless she was utterly blinded by vanity, by a fatuous misapprehension of looks she had now and again found fastened upon her, of casual words and actions escaping from a reticent man, he had cared for her at that time. She would sooner have died than admit to her brother that she believed this. To him, as to her aunt, while hotly defending Ivor Lawrence, whenever a discussion concerning him arose, she always declared that, as "there had been nothing between them," her only feeling as to his now holding aloof from them was grief at the alienation of the most trusted friend she had ever had. Of course, Mrs. Frampton was much too acute to be deceived by these protestations. When the accusations against Lawrence were made public, Grace's health and spirits were so visibly affected for a time that those who loved her most could not but see how strong a hold this man had taken on her heart. Nearly eight months had passed since then, and to all outward seeming she had recovered her buoyant tone, her healthy interest and capacity of deriving pleasure from things

around her. Only at rare moments, and when alone, as now, did the flood-gates of a grief, the well-springs of which lay so far below the surface, rise up and overflow.

Nevertheless, after a while her brave spirit rose. She must not succumb to her trouble. For the sake of others she must put it away from her. She rose and bathed her eyes. She had an engagement to a "ladies' luncheon" party, convened at the house of an agreeable woman, almost a stranger to Grace, who, after securing her, had invited seventeen others "to meet Miss Ballinger." The luncheon was exquisite and well-served; the conversation general and very pleasant.

"I had no idea it could have been *so* pleasant," she said, afterwards. "I really think eighteen Englishwomen would have been very dull, all the waves floundering together without a male rock to dash themselves against. But these waves had so much salt in them! I felt myself quite invigorated by plunging among them."

The truth was these waves were rather stronger than those which played, as a rule, upon the fine shores of fashionable New York life. The women here met were almost all interested and active in better things than gossip, parties, dress. Their fields and their aims were diverse; some of them

were young and active, some past middle age, but with keen intelligence undimmed, sympathies warm as in girlhood, and a playful humor—a humor altogether national, conveyed sometimes in a word, the turn of a phrase, lighting with the illusive flame of a will-o'-the-wisp swamps into which an interchange of talk so often flounders. They were not pretentious, though many of them did adventure upon subjects that demand more time, thought, and preparation than most English-women conceive it fitting to give to any study. One girl had been through a course of anatomy; not, as it appeared, with any ulterior object, but in order to master the wonderful mechanism of the human frame, "which," as she said, with a hard directness which sounded odd in one so young, "being a fact always present, should interest us more than it does. We can learn, and we ought to know all about it; for this is a thing which affects our whole being here, our present and our future; whereas the soul, which people trouble themselves so much about, is only a matter of speculation. It seems a pity to waste time on a subject we know so little of."

Grace was too wise to enter into a discussion with the youthful philosopher. This was a phase which would probably pass away in a few years, when, if the girl fell under right influence, she

might learn that there were higher truths than those which can be tangibly felt. In the meantime, the uncompromising antagonism to all conventional acceptances and polite euphemisms, the resolve to seize the truth to her hand and probe it thoroughly, interested Grace. This was a type of American character she had not yet met.

But among the middle-aged women was one whose studies and experience were far more curious. She had large means, which she had partly expended among the fast-diminishing tribe of Zuni Indians in Arizona, whose language she had rescued from oblivion by means of the phonograph. The music of their hymns and chants and invocations for rain had also thus been noted down, and several unique objects—notably a jewelled toad, supposed to be a god—secured by her excavations. The ruined city, made of adobe, in which this tribe dwelt, had been saved from total destruction through this lady's exertions, who induced the government to aid her in protecting them from the attacks of other and more powerful tribes. So interested had she become in this people, that she had bidden some of their high-priests to journey to the East, and visit her —which they did. She described most graphically their dignity, their admirable breeding, the eloquence of their gestures, expressing their mean-

ing so clearly as scarcely to need the interpreter's verbal translation of their speech. They went thrice a day down to the sea-shore—the house stood on a cliff—to make their prayers and libations. "You are not as religious as we are," they said, "but we suppose you are as religious as you have time to be."

Some day a learned monograph will be published of this people, their language, their faith, their customs; and the philologists will fight over their origin, and the plough of civilization will pass over their poor, mud-built city; but Grace was interested in meeting the enthusiast through whose courage, energy, and devotion so much had been rescued as a text-book for historical research. It was a fine, sonorous note in the diapason of American character, and the young Englishwoman heard it with pleasure.

That evening she and her brother dined with Mrs. Caldwell. It was not a large party; and the guests, with the exception of Mrs. Flynn and her cousin, were all men—mostly men distinguished in some way other than that of having amassed large fortunes.

It is true that Alan Brown, the young Anglomaniac—"and stupid at that," as May Clayton said—was present, but as he sat next Doreen, to whom he talked in a low tone, his insignificance

was not offensive. Brilliant Chudleigh, the advocate, whose seathing eloquence was a proverb, jovial Dr. Parr, simmering with fun, ready to boil over at any moment, wise and witty General Stout, famous in the war, and now in peace time as great a favorite with women as with men, the poet Sloper, so gently humorous, so blandly pungent, Mordannt's shrewd friend Reid, and two others, whom the Ballingers had not met before, threw their separate contributions into the common pool, and produced that best of round games—general conversation. No one monopolized the talk, but the men had the best of it. May Clayton held her own, it is true; the provocation of her nimble tongue stimulated the clever elders around; her sallies elicited peals of laughter; and from time to time, when there was a lull, she set the humming-top—as with a neat flick of the whip—once more frantically spinning. But as dinner progressed, and the conversation, leaving generalities, entered into the arena of personal chaff, the spur of the girl's tongue was not needed. The combatants were on their mettle, with a gallery to applaud their brilliant attacks and retorts, their assaults, and reprises, and carrying of the war into the enemy's country; each man had his bout, and the fooling, conducted with perfect good humor, was delightful. Such a contest would

not be possible in England. In chaff, we hold that all is permissible but the truth. But here to wound one of these dexterous knights, armed cap-à-pie, seemed impossible. Chudleigh had tried for the Presidency of the United States, and had failed. The mock commiseration he met with at the hands of Parr, who deplored the waste of fine oratory spilled upon that occasion, was countervailed by the satirical sympathy Chudleigh affected in rounded periods at the charges of bribery and corruption brought in the public prints against a well-known body, of which the M.D. was a leading member. This spear-thrust might have been expected to pierce his armor. Not at all; he rode on laughing, and apparently untouched. Then it was proposed that government should be memorialized to create the post of Laureate to the United States, in order that the poet Sloper should be elected thereto. His verses had failed to soften the hearts of his native town so far as to induce them to send him as their representative to Congress, but this want of appreciation, this deadness of heart—said General Stout, warming to his subject—would, no doubt, disappear when Sloper's Sonnets received the stamp of official recognition. As to the general himself, he received thrusts on all sides, as to his campaigns in stage-land, his conquests in the green-room, his capitu-

lations under (scenic) canvas, his ready response to the cry from oppressed damsels of "Stout to the rescue!"

The Ballingers were both much amused. Mordaunt, between Mrs. Caldwell and Mrs. Flynn, had two foot-notes, as it were, to the text of all this personal raillery. Mrs. Flynn was the more ample and unrestrained expositor of the two, Mrs. Caldwell not going beyond a hint, sometimes, where the younger and livelier lady became exhaustive. Grace had Pierce Caldwell beside her. He fully entered into the fun, and told her enough to make her understand the point of each attack, the dexterity of each defence, the imperturbable good temper with which all who mingled in the fray bore the several blows.

"People say you Americans are thin-skinned," she said. "Perhaps there is one side of you—that side which you turn to *us*—which has a sensitive skin; but the other side, that which is presented to yourselves, must be covered with a perfect hide! Englishmen could not stand these blows below the belt, they would turn very nasty. I saw a clever young man once in a country-house retire to bed because—we were playing at 'Twenty-one Questions'—he was so offended at an impudent bit of chaff. We had thought of the Duke of Wellington's monument in St. Paul's, and when

he could not guess it, and had to be told, he declared indignantly he had never heard of it. 'Perhaps you never heard of the Duke of Wellington,' said a pert prig, whereupon the discomfited guesser went straight off to bed. Now, I see that no American could possibly be so silly. You have your tempers so admirably in hand."

"Well, I don't know about that," said Pierce, dubiously. "It all depends on whether we think a man means mischief or not. These fellows here, you see, are all good friends. They enjoy sharpening their wits on each other."

"So it seems," said Grace, laughing.

Dr. Parr, on her other side, had been watching his opportunity to fire sly shots obliquely across the table at Chudleigh, and had not heard the foregoing. He now turned round and addressed the young Englishwoman with the unmistakable air that says, "Enough of fooling. Let us be serious," though there was still a sub-cutaneous twitch about his mouth.

"What do you think of us, Miss Ballinger? I am afraid you will go back and say we are an *un*licensed set of victuallers, making a terrible row, without any manners, any polish, eh?"

"I am so glad you put it that way, instead of asking me what I think of America, which is so difficult to answer, and which I am asked, upon an

average, twelve times every day. It isn't at all difficult to answer *you*. I should like to dine with such unlicensed victuallers every day of my life."

"Great Scot! This is, indeed, an incentive to continue in our evil ways," cried the doctor. "You cannot be English, Miss Ballinger, quite, *quite* English? A drop of Irish or foreign must be infused into your blue blood, surely?"

"Why so? Are we not the most appreciative nation upon earth?"

"Critical—say critical—and I am with you. You measure everything by one standard—your own. I don't say you are wrong, but it makes English approval sometimes appear to be tinged with—what shall I say? condescension? Do you know the story of the American who drew the attention of a patriotic Briton to a gorgeous sunset here? The Britisher replied, 'Sunset? Ah! you should see one of Her Majesty's sunsets!'"

Grace laughed heartily.

"That is very cruel of you, Dr. Parr. I wanted to say such a number of nice things to you, and now I can't. I shall have to pour them all out to Mr. Chudleigh, who won't call my appreciation 'condescension.'"

Here a name, bandied across the table, struck Grace's ear.

"Planter has cornered the market, they say."

"He has high Scriptural authority for doing so," said Chudleigh. "Joseph cornered the market, and made a very good thing out of it."

"I suspect that is more than Planter will do," struck in the general. "He will come to grief some day with his gigantic speculations."

"What!" cried May Clayton, with her chirruping little voice, "has he bitten off more than he can chew?"

Ballinger laughed immoderately. Probably this turned Miss Clayton's attention more directly to him.

"By the bye, Sir Mordaunt, is it true that you are going to give up your baronetcy, and become an American citizen?"

"You have given me too little encouragement," he replied, promptly, with a stage sigh.

"Well!" she said, "I don't know about *encouragement.* I should say you have neglected your opportunities. But I believe you followed my advice. Only take care you don't bark up the wrong tree."

"There's such a forest," he said. "It's awfully confusing."

Grace had some conversation with her hostess after dinner.

The Caldwells were to leave New York for their home in the Rocky Mountains in the course of a

week. It was arranged that Grace should write to Mrs. Caldwell when she and her brother went westward, and Mrs. Frampton was included in the cordial invitation to "Falcon's Nest" offered to the English travellers.

"I like Mrs. Caldwell," said Mordaunt as they drove home. "She is a good sort. The girl's dull."

"Not at all; she is young, and has not lost the sweet privileges of youth for remaining in the background, as Miss Clayton has."

"Give me a girl who has lost the privilege, then. I can't stand a bread-and-butter miss. I wish Mrs. Caldwell would ask Mrs. Flynn and her cousin to Falcon's Nest when we are there; not that I shall be there for more than a day or two, I fancy. I shall leave you and Aunt Su, while I go off to Pueblo, and stay with Charington at his ranch."

"I should not much like to be shut up with Aunt Su and Miss Clayton," returned his sister, laughing. "It would be what you call 'rather warm quarters.' I like the girl myself. I am sure there is no harm in her—not half so much as there is in many very demure girls—but I fancy I see Aunt Su's face at her way of going on. I shouldn't mind her meeting Miss Planter, now," she added, glancing with a smile at him as the

lamplight flashed upon his face. "Miss Planter would not offend her taste."

He did not reply, and the rest of the drive home was performed in silence.

CHAPTER XI

The ball of hospitality which had been set rolling by kindly hands a month since was snatched from one to another during that last week of our travellers' stay in New York, and seemed to acquire a more vigorous impetus as the day of their departure drew near. That this constant round of social engagements was fatiguing to Grace, that she longed for a little repose and leisure for reflection, is true; but, under the circumstances, perhaps it was as well that this luxury was withheld. She had come abroad, as her brother's companion, with the definite resolve to put the past behind her. For months one subject —one cruel, gnawing trouble—had absorbed all her thoughts. It should do so no longer. She would never suffer a hint of reproach, or a word of accusation against Ivor Lawrence to fall from the lips of either her aunt or brother without defending him hotly. But, unless forced to do so, she never uttered his name. Both Mrs. Frampton and Mordaunt recognized the effort to dismiss him

from her heart. They thought they were helping her to do so; but they learned the inefficacy of abuse. Happily, there was a natural rebound in her healthy temperament against sitting down with folded hands, and doing nothing in this world. Visiting the poor was not in her line; she had tried "slumming" in London, and had found it a failure—it was the only thing which paralyzed her with shyness. The pursuit of science and art were equally foreign to her nature. The work which seemed fitting and natural for her just now was to be Mordaunt's help-mate and companion, until such time as he should select one for life. He was not made to be alone. And this work which her hand had found, she would do, as she had done everything, with all her might.

Therefore it was that she had thrown herself frankly and without stint into the stream of society in New York, resolved to take what interest and amusement she could find, without letting any one—least of all her brother—see the dark shadow that obtruded itself, from time to time, across the brilliant scene. And she had her reward. There is not so much cordiality in the world that a warm-hearted girl can remain indifferent to such a welcome as had been accorded to Grace, even where there was not much in common between her and her new acquaintances. Some she really liked

greatly; some had only amused her; towards all she felt unaffectedly grateful for the many thoughtful attentions she had received. The Hurlstones had been persistently kind, and now proposed to receive Mrs. Frampton, their old acquaintance, on her landing; but, as regarded them, Grace could not but feel it was just as well that her brother and she were leaving New York. If the girl took Mordaunt's spasmodic flirtation seriously, the sooner he was removed from her the better. Grace was sceptical as to his ever being very hard hit; at all events, Beatrice Hurlstone was not the one to deal the decisive blow.

As to her other acquaintances, the Caldwells and Mrs. Siebel were those from whom she parted with most regret. The first Grace hoped soon to see again; the latter was to be in Europe next summer, when she and Miss Ballinger would meet. Jem Gunning had gone to recover his equilibrium from defeat at St. Augustine. Grace was glad to be spared any farewells from the young millionnaire. Mr. Sims was so peripatetic that he might turn up anywhere—at Boston, or Chicago, or San Francisco. "As long as I am this side the grave you are never safe from me," as he himself put it. Mrs. Van Winkle proposed to give a *thé funèbre* on the Ballingers' departure. She had lately given one on the death of a third cousin, who

had left her an amethyst necklace. "A thing I couldn't wear, you know, and so I sold it, and spent the produce in cypress wreaths and immortelles, tied with black ribbon, with which I decorated the room and the tea-table in the poor thing's honor; and though we didn't have 'funeral baked meats,' we ate '*soupirs*,' and every one said it was charming, so original." But Grace declined the proffered honor, as she was obliged to do many other entertainments that last week.

Some twelve miles from Boston, but served by a branch railway which decants the traveller at a station hard by the gate of the grounds, stands a pleasant gray stone house of moderate size, built by the late Mr. Richardson. That talented architect, who struck out a new line in domestic building, and created, it may be said, the school of American architecture which is now so flourishing throughout the land, never designed a more picturesque home than this of Brackly. The low Byzantine arch, beneath which the front-door steps ascend, and then turn sharp to the right hand; the heavy mullioned bay-window and corner turret with its sharp pinnacle and wide range of outlook, over the cliffs and down to the sea; the steep-pitched red roof and stone balcony thrust out from a recessed window under another arch; the heavy oak door with its old Venetian knocker

of wrought iron—every feature is agreeable and harmonizes. And the face of this delightful dwelling, on the summit of a green slope, surrounded by fine beeches, is as the face of a friend from the Old World to the traveller who has just left behind him the hideous uniformity of city streets. The trees were still bare; through the rich brown earth of the flower-beds not even a crocus had as yet thrust its golden head; but the sea beyond the sand-hills was very blue, and the logwood down by the lake made a spot of crimson color against the gray-green bank.

Grace lingered for an instant on the door-step.

"How lovely!" she cried.

"There ought to be ducks there. By Jove! I see some," said Mordaunt.

Then they turned into the oak-panelled hall. A curtain of old Flemish tapestry was lifted at the farther end, and Mrs. Courtly, as lithe as a girl of fifteen, with a garden hat, an apron, and a pair of scissors in her hand, ran towards them.

"Welcome to Brackly! So glad to see you both. And you have brought fine weather. It snowed yesterday—I was in despair. You like my little home? I am so glad. It is not like your grand English places, but the view is pretty, and the house comfortable, I hope."

"There is comfort for the eyes, and comfort for

the mind, I see," said Grace, looking round her, "as well as for the body."

"Those were wonderful cobs that brought us from the station," said Mordaunt. "I never sat behind better steppers."

"You shall sit behind something better to-morrow, Sir Mordaunt—one of our fast trotters; but come into the parlor, or, as you would say, the drawing-room."

She lifted the portière again and they entered a long apartment, with deep bay-windows, at the farther end of which was a daïs, raised upon three steps, where stood the piano. From this "coign of vantage," the view over the sand-hills to the sea was more extensive; and here some rocking-chairs, and a table covered with books, showed that it was a favorite corner with Mrs. Courtly and her friends. On the walls of this room were a few good Italian pictures, not too many; one or two fine plates of Maestro Giorgio, and Spanish lustre ware, with silver-bound missals and ivory caskets, in an old English glazed cabinet; in another some rare books. But the place had not the air of a curiosity-shop, nor was the first impression you received one of stupefaction at what it must all have cost. Thoroughly comfortable chairs, the last new books and magazines, the score of "Parsifal" upon the desk of the open

piano—these touches of modernity and cultivation "up to date" disarmed the Philistine who might be disposed to charge the collector of these treasures with æsthetic affectation.

"How charming it all is!" exclaimed Grace. "I never saw a more delightful 'lady's bower.' It seems as if nothing but what is refined could live here—nothing but sunshine enter those windows!"

"Ah! it is twelve years old; it has already had its share of storm and showers." She sighed, and then, turning, said, "I see you are looking at my portrait, Sir Mordaunt. It is by Michael Angelo Brown. Do you like it?"

"No, I think it is horrid. It doesn't do you justice, Mrs. Courtly."

"And I think it masterly," said his sister.

"He has caught that enigmatical expression that reminded me, when I first saw you, of Leonardo's 'Gioconda.'"

"I am pleased. You are the second person who has said that. I shall tell Brown."

"You may add also what I say," said Mordaunt, laughing, "that it doesn't do you a bit of justice."

"Oh! you are a flatterer and a Philistine, Sir Mordaunt. You prefer prettiness to individuality. The New School, which Brown represents here,

rather courts ugliness; certainly would rather have ugliness than lose individuality."

"I know. I've seen a whole lot he did of Mrs. Van Winkle. I thought them all beastly. Mrs. Van Winkle fencing, apparently in a vapor bath; Mrs. Van Winkle yawning—no, singing, I suppose it is, because she is at the piano, with one hand up, and her little finger stuck out at right angles with her hand. Forgive me if I say it is all so damned affected."

"You talk of what you don't understand, Mordy," said Grace, impatiently. "Both those pictures are very, *very* clever."

Mrs. Courtly gave her low, rippling laugh.

"I like the fresh expression of opinion. One so seldom gets it. Mrs. Planter—you know the Planters?—stood dumb before my portrait for a minute or two. Then she said the *chiaro-oscuro* was wonderful."

"I should like it better if it were more *chiaro* and less *oscuro*," laughed Mordaunt in reply. "Is she a fool?"

"By no means. She is a dear woman, only she has not the courage of her opinions. She is so anxious to be amiable. They arrived this morning, and are gone up to their rooms to rest. I expect Quintin Ferrars presently, and two great friends of mine from Boston—George Laffan, the

author, and Burton, a young musician, whose compositions I think charming."

"I shall be quite out of it among all this talent!" sighed Mordaunt; and he shrugged his shoulders, with a smile.

"How absurd you are, Sir Mordaunt! Is he accustomed to have compliments paid him all the time, Miss Ballinger? Is he fishing?"

"He has had too many since he landed. Don't increase the evil, Mrs. Courtly. It is quite time we went to the Wild West. In New York we both ran the risk of being spoiled."

"We shall not spoil you here," rejoined her hostess, with one of her bright smiles, "because it is what is best in you, and therefore impossible to spoil, that we Bostonians shall chiefly prize. I claim to be a Bostonian, you know, because I was born there. Ah! I see you are looking at that small picture by Jansen. Do you recognize the face? It is supposed to be Mary Stuart."

"She must have had as many heads as Cerberus," said Mordaunt, "for no two resemble each other."

"Pardon me! this is very like the one at Windsor. Next it is a Rembrandt I bought at the Demidoff sale at Florence."

"How wonderful, to make an ugly old woman so interesting!" Grace exclaimed. "What an

odd sort of battledore and shuttlecock Art and Nature play! One would not be attracted by a face like a withered walnut till one saw this admirable portrait. The next time one saw it in the flesh one would be delighted."

"Well, I shouldn't," said Mordaunt, moving on to a cabinet of miniatures. "I like these much better. In miniatures they have always got such awfully nice skins—like velvet. I wish more women in real life had such complexions. That must have been a little duck—that woman with the powdered hair."

"Madame de Pompadour—well, she *was* a duck, in her way. She swam in troubled waters, and so did this poor bird, who was more of a swan, Marie Antoinette, white and stately, with her long throat. And this is our Martha Washington, more of the barn-door fowl, and near to her Lafayette, and further on Franklin. I love to talk to these historic ghosts. I can take up one of these miniatures and be carried right back to those days. I seem to read all their stories in those faces. But here is the tea, and more substantial food than ghosts can give us."

Two servants entered with trays, which they arranged on a table, with an old Chelsea service, out of which it was manifest one could drink nothing but a "dish" of tea, and a George III.

"equipage" of silver, urn-shaped kettle and all. Grace could have fancied herself in an old English country-house, where all had remained unchanged for the last hundred years.

Presently the Planter ladies descended. It was obvious that the "rest" they were credited with having required was an euphony for elaborate toilette. The mother's clothes became her years, but the daughter was so nobly beautiful that she should have been simply dressed. Grace, in her tight-fitting tweed, felt no feminine envy for the gold-braided waistcoat and velvet jacket, trimmed with blue fox, which the girl wore; here, in the country, this splendor was singularly out of place; even in the city it would have seemed to English ideas a little oppressive on one so young. But the smile on that beautiful and by no means weak face was so captivating that "the first instalment of her," as Grace afterwards expressed it, could not fail to please.

"I am so glad to meet you in the country," she said, as she sat down on the sofa next to Grace. "One knows people so much better in the country. Why would you not come to Tuxedo, when Jem Gunning asked us to meet you? We had such a good time. But it would have been ever so much better if you had come."

"It is very kind of you to say that, but I never

promised Mr. Gunning to go to Tuxedo. I should have been very glad to have met you, but—I am sure this is much nicer than Tuxedo."

"Of course it is. Brackly is just like an English house, isn't it?"

"Yes, and that, I see, is a compliment in your eyes."

"I should think so! I love England. Do you know Wraxford? No? or Binly? This reminded me a little of Binly."

"I should have thought the duke had too many places for any of them to look as much lived in as this does. That is the advantage of having only one home."

Miss Planter looked puzzled for an instant—not longer.

"If you fill your house full of friends all the time, it will soon get to look lived in, I think. You in England understand all the amusements of country life so well. We have no country life, no hunting and shooting for the men, to take them away from business; so, if we do go to the country, it's awfully slow, and we never remain long."

"You have no interests, I suppose? Perhaps it requires an education to feel an interest in a village—in the school—in all the little schemes that arise for the welfare of the poor, in the cut-

ting of trees, and irrigation of the land, and gardening, and beautifying your property. Those who really love country life have no end of interests and amusements, independent of society."

"Well, of course I saw nothing of that quiet sort of life. It was boating or riding, lawn tennis or picnics, with dancing or music of an evening, all the time."

"And is the result of your experience that you would like to live in England?"

"Well, I don't know. I had a very good time there, but I am awfully fond of my own country, my own people. I would require a great inducement to give them up. I suppose the truth is, it would all depend on the man. I should want to be very much in love."

"I am glad to hear that. It is supposed to be an antiquated idea, as much out of date here, I suppose, as with us. But as you have made so many friends in England, if you return there you are almost sure to find the man."

"I don't know about that. Papa doesn't want me to find him in England. Mamma doesn't mind, if the man has a good position." Here she turned, with her lovely smile, to Ballinger, and said, "Don't you want to give me some tea, Sir Mordaunt?"

As he handed the cup to her, his sister read in

his eyes that he wished for her seat by Miss Planter; so Grace rose, and joined the two ladies at the tea-table. She could not help thinking that Mrs. Courtly was just a little bored by the conversation of the "dear woman." The desire not to be ranked as an ordinary Pittsburgher, but as a person belonging to the most exclusive circles in London and New York, was a little irritating. She could talk of nothing else. Pittsburgh was relegated to the dust-bin of things to be swept away, though there Père Planter was still amassing his dollars, and, while he allowed his spouse to spend them freely during the greater part of the year, constrained her to join him occasionally. Grace sat by and listened to Mrs. Planter's small fry of gossip, floating in a shallow bath of sentiments, and brought to the surface to nibble from time to time, by an "Ah!" or "Indeed!" from her hostess; much as an indolent fisher languidly casts a net, conscious that the only fish to be caught are insignificant and flabby.

There was a pleasant diversion, however, before long, caused by the arrival of Messrs. Laffan and Burton. The coming of the two Bostonians was hailed by Mrs. Courtly with pretty demonstrations of pleasure. She was never afraid of showing the satisfaction she derived from the presence of her men friends; and this frankness of demon-

stration was sometimes ill-naturedly commented upon by her own sex.

Miss Ballinger had met Mr. Laffan in London. Who had not met that gracious, elderly man of the world, who acted so long as a social bridge between the two countries? The bridge is now broken; others will arise in succession, but none will ever take exactly the place of that which is gone. It is needless to describe one so well known, who was always greeted with as much warmth in London as in his native city; it is enough to say that in Mrs. Courtly's house he was a special favorite, and a very constant visitor.

Mr. Burton, on the other hand, was an unknown quantity to Grace. She had never before met a romantic-looking American, with tender, dreamy eyes, and that soft, far-away manner which indicates a mind little fit to cope with the hard actualities of life. He had none of the brilliant incisiveness common to his countrymen; he would have been sadly at a loss in a contest with May Clayton. But it was not till after dinner, when he sat down to play, that she realized how much the man lived in a world of his own. He seemed to forget that he had an audience; he was talking to himself, as it were, in that sweet poet's language which only the chosen few can understand. As his soliloquy rambled on, through doubt, re-

monstrance, despair, from plaintive elegy to wild rhapsody, two at least among his hearers were stirred as though they were listening to the passionate struggles, the jubilant conquest of a troubled soul.

But Quintin Ferrars was not one of those to whom music speaks. He had arrived very late, and Grace had not seen him till just before dinner. At table the conversation was general, but later he sat down by Grace, who was next the piano, and began talking, regardless of the fact that Burton was playing. Twice Grace placed her finger on her lips, the third time Mrs. Courtly came up and shook her fan at him.

"You bad man! If you want to talk, you must go into the next room."

"Won't you come, Miss Ballinger?" he said. "Your brother and Miss Planter are there. That will equalize the company."

"I am sorry for their want of taste. I prefer listening to Mr. Burton."

Ferrars said nothing, but retired to a distant corner of the room, and took up the *Century*. He spoke to no one during the remainder of the evening. Mrs. Planter murmured at proper intervals that it was truly delightful, so intellectual, so metaphysical (she pronounced it mutterphysical). Mrs. Courtly and Grace scarcely spoke, but

silence is often more eloquent than words, and in his hostess, at least, the young musician knew he had a listener who understood what it was he meant to say. It was this power of understanding which made Mrs. Courtly a delightful companion to so many and to such very different sorts of people.

CHAPTER XII

The next day was Sunday, and when the party assembled at breakfast, at half-past nine, it appeared that Mrs. Courtly had already been to early communion at the neighboring church.

"The carriage will be here at eleven for any one who wants to go to morning service. I am going to evensong instead, and shall take Mr. Laffan for a drive this morning. What will you do, Miss Ballinger?"

Grace said she wished to go to church, whereupon Miss Planter declared she meant to go also, adding,

"I hear Samuel Sparks is near here, and will probably preach."

"Yes," said Mrs. Courtly. "That is the reason I am not going."

"Is he not a very great preacher?" asked Grace.

"Yes, but I do not consider him orthodox. He is too broad in his views to suit me."

Grace had been under a vague impression that all American religion was "broad"; she had no

idea that a section of the community cherished a rigid ritualism.

"Samuel Sparks is a lovely man," said Mrs. Planter, shaking her head gently, "but perhaps a little *too*—"

Her criticism was left to shift for itself as best it might in the minds of her hearers. All the men had heard the famous preacher except Sir Mordaunt, and he was not a very regular church-goer. However, on this occasion, he declared that his curiosity was fired, he would accompany the ladies. Mrs. Courtly smiled blandly across the silver urn at him.

"Mrs. Van Winkle will no longer be able to compare you to Guy Livingstone. I am glad you go to church. *You*, I know, Quintin, are past praying for—"

"Quite." He cut her short, decisively.

"In England it is thought good form for men to go to church. They did so when we stayed in country-houses there all the time," said Mrs. Planter.

"All the time?" repeated Sir Mordaunt, interrogatively, with a look of amused wonder.

"Mamma means every Sunday," explained her daughter; then added, laughing, "All, except a few old heathens, politicians, and philosophers, and people who buried themselves in the library."

"I am not a politician, but I hope I am a philosopher," said Ferrars, with a tolerant smile.

"I am neither one nor the other," sighed Burton, with an appealing look at Mrs. Courtly. "But when the music is bad, my soul is in revolt; it makes me so cross, I go away worse than I came. And the music in your church here is very bad—you know it is, Mrs. Courtly."

So the three drove off to church together. Nothing in the service invited comment (the music being no worse than the Ballingers were used to in their own country church), until Mr. Sparks began to read the first lesson. He had not opened his lips till then. Apparently there was a storage of sound waiting to escape, and it rushed forth with a volubility truly astounding. Ballinger looked at his sister with elevated brows. It was clear that the minister expected the congregation to be conversant with the text of Holy Writ; otherwise it was impossible to follow him. He read also a portion of the Communion service in a manner that seemed to Grace little short of irreverent. But all this was as nothing compared to the rapidity of his utterance when he reached the pulpit. His sermon was a splendid piece of oratory, charged with noble thought, clad in language that seemed, like lightning, to strike and tear the ground. Then, as

the thunder rolled along, the scorn of self-seeking and of sloth, the denunciation of envy and uncharitableness, fell like hail, smiting the consciences of some who heard. But the electric rapidity with which the words poured down was such that, as flash succeeded flash, many of the congregation were blinded, groping their way feebly, and clutching at his meaning here and there. It required long usage (and to some of those assembled he was almost a stranger) or a sharp, retentive vision, not to be dazzled as the lightning struck peak after peak, and the wind swept by, and the great storm drove on, relentless, without pause or hesitation.

Miss Planter only removed her beautiful eyes from the preacher to glance surreptitiously from time to time at her companions, and judge of the effect produced on them. Grace listened, eager and absorbed; her brother gnawed his moustache, and looked ill at ease. When, at last, the torrent of words stopped, and the congregation slid out of church, in various mental conditions, the American girl's curiosity found its vent.

"Well?" she asked, addressing Mordaunt. "What do you say? Is he not just wonderful?"

"Wonderful! I believe you. I never heard a chap pour out so many words to the minute

before. It's perfectly awful, going on like this, for more than half an hour without stopping!"

"How I wished I could write shorthand!" exclaimed his sister. "It is too sad to think it is all gone beyond recall. I never heard anything so splendid, so stirring!"

"I am awfully glad you think so," said Miss Planter, who clung fondly to the English slang she had acquired. "I hoped that you, Sir Mordaunt, would have felt a little moved. Samuel Sparks always *does* move me so!"

"Move me! Why, I felt as if I were being hurled down a precipice, and were clutching wildly at twigs, roots, anything, to save myself. But it was no use; as fast as I caught hold of anything it slipped from me, and I felt just as if I'd come an awful cropper, bruised and stunned, when he stopped."

The conversation was renewed at luncheon, when Mrs. Courtly expressed a desire to know how her English guests had been impressed by the famous preacher. Her feelings as a patriotic American and a stanch churchwoman were divided. Miss Ballinger satisfied one sentiment, Sir Mordaunt the other.

"As far as I could make out," he said, "it was more of a lecture than a sermon. But then I made out very little."

"Whatever it was, it was exceedingly fine," said his sister, with decision. "I have come to the conclusion that Americans are much more eloquent than Englishmen. We have no orator in either House to compare with Mr. Sparks."

"A preacher has every other sort of orator at a disadvantage," said Ferrars, grimly. "He can say what he likes, he can scourge you, without fear of reprisal."

"Yes," said Mrs. Courtly, "and there must have been many present, who—like myself—object not only to Mr. Sparks's manner, but to his doctrine. His ability is undoubted, of course."

"How is it, Mrs. Courtly, that he comes to be preaching in a ritualistic church?" asked Grace.

"In former years the division was very great. Doctrine was paramount—before eloquence, or anything. Latterly there has been a growing tendency to let pastors of different views change pulpits. It is a practice I do not care about, but I suppose it has its advantages."

"If people *will* be preached at," said Ferrars, "it is better that the subject should be looked at from different points of view, with more freedom and liberty than from the narrow plane of one parsonic mind."

"Oh, my! Mr. Ferrars," exclaimed Mrs. Plan-

ter, "why should ministers have narrower minds than any one else?"

"I did not say they had. All minds looking at one subject from one point of view become narrow. I know mine has," he muttered. Then, with a satirical smile, "And yours. Like a good mother, it is concentrated on your daughter, and I am sure you only take one view of her future. You can't take an all-round survey of the position."

Mrs. Planter bristled; she did not know how to receive this odd speech. As she said afterwards to Mrs. Courtly, "it was so very—"

But her amiable hostess threw herself into the breach. With a smile at the girl, who was coloring, "There can be but one view of Clare's future," she said, quickly. "She has already most of the good things of this world. She will find the best, and be clever enough to know when she has found it."

It was a clear, still afternoon, though very cold. The recent snow had left the roads ankle-deep in slush, which there had been neither frost nor wind, the previous day, to dry. Now it was freezing, but not hard enough to affect the mud to any depth. The road on which all the party set out to walk was certainly very bad; it would have been difficult to match it in any country

district in England; but then, they did not walk on the road. The system, unknown in England, of laying down planks on the wayside for pedestrians, secured them a dry foot-path. But only two could walk abreast. Mr. Burton had timidly endeavored to place himself beside Grace; Ferrars's dominant perseverance, however, secured that privilege.

"You behaved very ill last night, Mr. Ferrars," began Miss Ballinger, with her characteristic fearlessness; "and again to-day at luncheon. You sulked, because you were not allowed to talk, and because I wanted to listen to the music; and to-day you attacked poor Mrs. Planter in a most unjustifiable way."

"I am not aware that I attacked her. I said her thoughts were concentrated on her daughter's future—"

"You know very well what you meant; and *she* knew. Cynics like you are always crying out against the follies and weaknesses of the world, and you have just as many yourselves. It is Hudibras over again—what you are 'inclined to' and what you 'have no mind to.'"

"I dare say you are right," he returned, with unusual gentleness; "but if you knew how the world has treated me, you would be more lenient in your judgment, you would understand how I

have come to be misanthropic and bitter. Perhaps some day you may know."

She felt sorry for him; she liked the man, with all his faults; perhaps she was not superior to the womanly love of influence over one whom few attracted. But her clear sense prevented her being blinded by the sophism of his defence, and she said, impulsively,

"You expect leniency, but you show none. And, then, you are like a spoiled child, sulking, as you did last night, or running away, as you did more than once in New York, because somebody came into the room you did not like! I think suffering ought to make men stronger, not weaker, Mr. Ferrars."

"You are severe, but you don't understand—you can't." He beat the long, yellow grass, that sprang up beside the planks, with the blackthorn in his hand. "If I were under your influence always," he added, in a low voice, "I should become more tolerant, I believe. I should look at things from a different point of view."

"Oh! If I were your sister," laughed Miss Ballinger, "I should lecture you. I should keep you in better order. As it is, I can't think, judging by your conduct, that my presence has a very beneficial effect."

"Perhaps not at the time; it marks the con-

trast more strongly." He paused a moment; how could he explain his feelings without startling her? And yet he felt some explanation of this enigmatical sentence was needed. "You see," he continued, "I have avoided society for years. I suppose I have become brutalized. I have lost the habit of concealing what I think, or doing what bores me. When I see you with such people as the Hurlstones, or Mrs. Van Winkle, or these Planters, my contempt of the world is increased. I want to talk to you or to go right away. If I enter into general conversation, I am sure to say something which will offend them."

"So little self-restraint? That comes from having shut yourself away from people, and having had your own way too long. All the men I have heard you speak so slightingly of, because they devote their whole time and energies to amassing big fortunes, lead really healthier lives than you do. They rub up against all manner of people; they give and take."

"They take more than they give," he said, with a sneer; "and because they rub up against all manner of people, they become callous. Is it well to become callous? to grow indifferent — almost blind to evil? to pass through life shrugging one's shoulders? Well, perhaps it is. And yet, I've

had enough to make me callous. But one can't alter one's nature."

"That is the defence of every one who gives in," she returned. "And it is horribly weak—quite unworthy of a man, *I* think. I am a great hero-worshipper, and all my heroes fight something—either their own passions, or something else they are resolved to conquer. And, as to growing callous, I don't see that any one need become so because he mixes with his fellow-creatures, even the very worst. We have a Great Example of that; and all the devoted workers among the poor of big cities do not lose their sense of right and wrong because they are pitiful and forbearing."

Here Mrs. Courtly, who was in front, turned round. They had reached the village, or rather small agglomeration of houses of the lower middle class—as they would be called in England—which were clustered around the church. The bell was ringing; one or two elderly women, a young girl, a pale-faced man carrying some books, were hurrying along. Mrs. Courtly said,

"Here I leave you; and I give Mr. Laffan into your charge, Miss Ballinger. What! Quintin, are you coming with me to church? Well, wonders will never cease. Good-by, all of you, till tea-time."

And so the bright, genial little lady, with her unwonted escort, left the rest of the party to find their own way home.

Quintin Ferrars had not entered a church for years. What prompted him to leave Grace, and accompany his friend? Was it the girl's words? Was it Mr. Laffan's joining her? Was it some inexplicable working of conscience?

CHAPTER XIII

A MAN who in middle age falls passionately in love, after many bitter disappointments, is as liable to do foolish things, in this same matter, as a raw youth of twenty. He is blind once more. Experience has taught him nothing. His hard, cruel insight into the folly and weakness of others is now of no avail. It may be that he is deceived in the woman; or, as in this case, that his worldly wisdom unaccountably fails him just when it should be of most service to protect him from committing an irretrievable error.

It was strange that Ferrars should mistake the difference Miss Ballinger showed in her manner when talking to him and to other men, the keen alacrity with which she listened to, and the fearless manner in which she attacked, many of his views, for growing interest of a deeper kind. He misunderstood her character, if not completely, at all events in part. No woman, he believed, could care so much to convert a man to her way of thinking, who was indifferent as to that man's

future. She was not indifferent; this young woman felt an unusual, almost a passionate concern about the lives of those in whom she was interested; and she was sincerely interested in Quintin Ferrars. But it was not the sort of interest he imagined; therein was the initial error of his conduct towards her.

On the way from church that evening, he sounded Mrs. Courtly.

"Have you had much conversation with Miss Ballinger since she arrived?"

"No private conversation. Why?"

"I saw a great deal of her in New York. We met every day. Sometimes I was for hours virtually alone with her. You can guess the result as regards myself. I thought I could never care for a woman again. But I care about this English girl as I never cared before. Has she ever spoken to you about me?"

"Not since we were on board the *Teutonic*. She asked me then about you, but I told her nothing. I knew you disliked your secret being talked of, and, as it has been so well kept, I resolved to say nothing, unless absolutely forced to do so." Then, after a pause, "She is not a woman to be lightly won, Quintin."

"No; but—unless I am an ass—she takes that sort of interest in me which may deepen into—

something stronger. What I want, on all accounts, is time. And that is just the difficulty. They will only be here a few days."

"Yes, they are going west, after passing a day or two in Boston, when their aunt arrives."

"And they will leave America in the spring. And if I follow them west, they will be staying with people I don't know. It is time, you see, I want—time!"

"Do nothing precipitate, at all events. When will you be free?"

"Not for five months yet. Oh, my dear friend! It seems such an age now, before I can throw off those cursed bonds; and I had grown so indifferent to them! My life was blasted, and as long as I loved no other woman, it was all one to me. But now—"

He broke off with so deep a sigh that Mrs. Courtly was startled. All the way home he talked of this English girl, and of nothing else. His friend recognized no longer the man who for years had found so little in life to prize, to admire, or to love.

On their return home they found Saul Barham. Mrs. Courtly had said nothing of his coming for the night; she had kept it as a little surprise for Grace, who would be pleased, she knew, to see him. And she was right. Miss Ballinger greeted

the young professor with a warmth which made Quintin Ferrars jealous. He had never liked Barham. More than once on board the *Teutonic* their opinions, or something that lay deeper than opinions, had clashed. Ferrars, so trenchant in his judgments, found a man, fifteen years his junior, who treated him more than cavalierly; for hesitation and diffidence were not among Saul's weaknesses. The young Harvard professor felt a certain contempt for this idle, wandering fellow-countryman of his, with his superior *nil admirari* tone about their common land; and he showed it. The greeting between the two, therefore, was cold, almost to freezing-point, on this occasion; and Ferrars was sore at heart when he saw Grace's fair face beaming with smiles.

"How is your mother, to begin with?" she asked; and when reassured on that point, "Have you felt strong, yourself, since you returned to work? You look a little pale—not quite as well as you did after our six days' voyage."

"Of course not," he replied, smiling. "The Creation took six days. I was re-created during that voyage. I was another man. For the last two months I have been a worm again, grubbing in the earth, but, barring a real little cough, I am pretty well."

She thought him looking thin and worn, but

said no more on the subject. She told him she meant to write to Mrs. Barham, and propose herself for an afternoon visit, as soon as she and her brother arrived in Boston.

"She will love to receive you, Miss Ballinger. She so often speaks of you to me. She would not venture to ask you to stay, but if any circumstance should render it possible for you to pass a few days under our roof it would be a real joy to—us all."

"It would be nice if I could manage it. Perhaps, if my brother goes to meet my aunt in New York, I may be able, for a couple of days—but I am afraid you won't be at home?"

"I can run down in the evenings to dine and sleep, and back to my work in Cambridge in the morning. I very often do it. It is no distance by rail. And I generally pass my Sunday at home. You will let me take you over Harvard College, I hope?"

"Certainly. I am looking forward to seeing Cambridge, which is associated in my mind with so many eminent men. You like your life there? You are happy?"

"I like my work; I know it is the best thing my hand can find to do, and I am told I do it successfully. Then I am in touch with men of congenial minds. But happy—?" He paused,

and looked out on the twilight deepening into night, with the fixed gaze in those large gray eyes which was so characteristic of him. "Happiness, I believe, depends greatly on physical conditions. I am not quite as strong as I should like to be. We have a splendid gymnasium. If I could take more athletic exercise than I do, I dare say I should have more even spirits."

Mrs. Courtly here joined them, and the little *tête-à-tête* was broken up. The lamps were brought in, the shutters closed. In the meantime Mrs. Planter, at the farther end of the room, was questioning Sir Mordaunt as to the new guest, whom Miss Ballinger appeared to know so well.

"Barham? I never heard of the name. It does not belong to any of our first families, anyhow."

"Well known in England," said Mordaunt, carelessly. "'Ingoldsby Legends,' you know."

"Do you mean there is any legendary lore connected with the Barhams? Well, they *may* have come over in the *Mayflower*, but I never heard them mentioned."

"No. I mean the author of 'The Jackdaw of Rheims,' and lots of other things—awfully good fun, you know—was a parson, named Barham."

"Oh! a minister—oh! And what is this young man?"

"A professor, I believe."

"He does not look like a well man. So *very*—"

"Yes, very," echoed Ballinger, impatiently. "But he makes up in brains, I am told, what he wants in flesh and muscle. My sister thinks a great deal of him. He is not my sort of man; rather a prig, I think; but people have different tastes. Now *she* couldn't bear Gunning, whom *I* thought not half a bad fellow."

"Jem Gunning is not very cultivated, I admit," said Mrs. Planter, authoritatively, as though cultivation and she were inseparable; "but he is *very* amiable."

"I don't think Grace cares for amiability alone," laughed her brother.

"Well, but—he *has* something else—one of our greatest *partis!*"

"That wouldn't affect her a bit. She is a queer girl."

"Looks to an alliance with your aristocracy, I conclude?"

He laughed again. "That is the last thing she would think of. I believe, Mrs. Planter, you think a great deal more of that in America than we do in England."

"Is that so? Well, I always say to Mr. Planter there's nothing like your aristocracy, Sir Mordaunt. I don't hold much to foreign nobility, but

English, when one has once seen them in their home—ah! they are so *very*—"

"Right you are, Mrs. Planter. But hasn't foreign nobility a considerable value among you, too? Look at the fuss they made in New York with that young Marquis de Tréfeuille."

"Well, I always told my daughter that he did not amount to much, though his patent of nobility dates from Louis XV. Clare does not care for foreigners, anyway."

"I'm glad you don't count us as foreigners. After all, we have the same blood, haven't we? If we were Scotch, we *might* be relations. It is such rot, that jealousy between the two countries."

Had he been the most astute diplomatist, he could not have made a speech better calculated to please Mrs. Planter. She said to her daughter, as they dressed for dinner, that she had always liked Sir Mordaunt Ballinger, but she found him now really too nice for anything.

The beautiful Clare murmured something which was not very intelligible to her mother. Indeed, her daughter's sentiments on this subject were not clear to her fond parent. The girl had been having a "good time" to-day, in almost uninterrupted flirtation with the English baronet. But Mrs. Planter attached no undue importance to

this. She knew her daughter too well. Clare had all the wisdom of her countrywomen in the conduct of such affairs: she would never lose her head; she would never be led, by vanity, or tenderness, or passion, to commit herself, until she was satisfied that this was the man, and none other, she ought, and desired to marry. Herein she showed her superiority to the English girl, who becomes quickly intoxicated, loses all balance of judgment, and plights her troth in a flood of foolish words, which she often bitterly regrets. We are apt to call the American cold and heartless. She is not necessarily so because she seems to be playing with a man, much as a cat does with a mouse. It may be that she is worldly and calculating; it may be that she is diverting herself at her adorer's expense. But there is the other possibility: she may be gauging, in the only way a woman can gauge, the man's character, and the measure of her liking for him. She does not succumb to his personal charm, to his fervent admiration, at once; she wants to know more of him, and, having very keen perceptions, builds up her knowledge from all the chance words he lets fall. It is true that she responds to his advances, that she "encourages" him, as we call it, more than custom approves in England; but she looks upon the game as a fair one, entailing, as she con-

ceives, but small damage to either party. Ever since she was a little girl she has known that man is a predatory animal, seeking whom he may devour. She has no idea of being devoured; least of all when she is a great heiress, fully conscious how many hunters are on her track. No! she will fight them with their own weapons, and when she yields it will not be from ignorance of their vulnerable points.

In this case Grace, who watched her brother's movements with keen interest, could not make up her mind how far either or both players were in earnest. Mordaunt had an unlimited capacity for flirtation; but under that thin surface of chaff and protestation, with which he met the attack of every pretty woman, there were layers of susceptibility, which had more than once been pierced. This careless, impudent young Englishman, with all his faults, had a heart. It had been touched, though happily not very seriously, before now. But if this state of things went on for several days, and if the girl had a stronger head than her brother (which Grace never doubted), and was only amusing herself, how would it be with Mordaunt then? She had not seen enough of Clare Planter to determine whether she wished her for a sister-in-law; but she was quite sure she had no prejudice against her on the score of nationality.

If the girl should care for him, and if her character was one likely to make him happy, Grace would further her brother's wishes by every means in her power.

Her reflections did not take this substantive form till Tuesday morning. The Sunday evening had been very pleasant to every one but Ferrars. Burton had played, and Saul Barham had sat beside Grace, and a few words had passed now and again during the intervals of the music. There was a bond of sympathy between them which, for the time being, required no other language. Mordaunt and Clare were not so easily satisfied. At the farther end of the long room, where their whispers could not reach Mrs. Courtly, they lay back on a settee, the shaded lamp-light defining dimly the silhouette of their two heads, and touching more sharply the edges of the girl's pink and silver dress and the tips of patent-leather which terminated the man's long legs, crossed one over the other. That was the picture which often rose before Grace's eyes when she pondered on what her brother's fate would be. The actual dialogue would not have struck an eavesdropper as sentimental. But then there are so many different avenues to the citadel of the affections.

She was fond of referring to England. "Have you ever stayed at Lord Grantham's?"

"No. He never asked me, and I shouldn't have gone if he had."

"Why not?"

"Oh! I don't know. He's not in my set. I shouldn't meet any one I knew there."

"That is very civil to me! We stayed there quite a number of times. Pray, why is he not in 'your set'? Is he not of as good a family as there is in England?"

"Yes. It's a very old title. But rank isn't everything. That is a mistake Americans are so apt to make. Men of rank are not always much thought of in society."

"Well, I don't care whether he is much thought of or not, *I* think he is a very nice fellow."

"If I had known he was such a great friend of yours, I wouldn't have said a word. You asked me."

She laughed. "How funny Englishmen are! I see I must never ask one man his opinion of another, unless he belongs to the same club—if I don't mean him to be sniffed at. Well! I am never influenced by any one's opinion. If I like people, I like them, and if I don't, I don't."

"Capital! You have the courage of your opinions. So few girls have the pluck to do that, to stick to what they think. I wonder if you will always remain like that."

She was playing with her fan, and looked up, to find his eyes fixed upon her. She laughed lightly.

"I have been chaffed pretty badly about being an Anglomaniac since I returned home; but I don't mind. I like England and Englishmen. I don't care so much about Englishwomen. They are kind of condescending, I find, and I suspect they are a little jealous of us—so many of our girls having carried off their young men. In short, I believe our best time with you is over."

"Why do you say that? I thought people were so very civil to you?"

"So they were—many of them—more than civil; but my eyes and ears were wide open. I saw things—I heard things said about me; and I know we were refused invitations to several balls because we were American."

"No, only because society is already much too big for our small houses; and as to jealousy, isn't that a feminine form of appreciation?"

"Do males rise superior to it?"

They both laughed.

On the Monday morning, Barham returned early to Cambridge, and Ferrars had the field once again to himself.

Soon after breakfast a buggy came round, drawn by a famous American trotter, who had won sev-

eral races, and who, to the uninitiated, was as ugly a specimen of the equine race as could well be seen. His long straight neck, poked forward, his flat back, and his action in walking or ambling, were utterly opposed to the Greek, or even the mediæval, conception of what a horse should be, and how he should move. It appeared, moreover, that this wonderful pace, which was the animal's *specialité*, could not be maintained for more than a mile or so. Therefore, for all practical purposes, it seemed a useless gift, purchased at the sacrifice of grace and beauty; but perhaps Grace was the only one present who thought this. Mordaunt, for whose special delectation the buggy was brought, was invited by Mrs. Courtly to take Miss Planter for a drive. Of course he was delighted; the girl did not hesitate; only Mrs. Planter thought fit to say to Grace,

"We should not do this in England, of course, but here in the country, you know, and especially in the West, where we live, the young people drive out together, all the time."

"If it is the custom, why not?"

"I was afraid you might think it sort of strange. But I assure you Clare has been *very* strictly brought up."

Mordaunt's declaration on his return was that

he had never enjoyed a drive so much in his life, and his untiring attendance upon Clare during the remainder of the day first made Grace think seriously of his condition. She lay awake some time that night, and her meditations ended in a resolve to speak to Mrs. Courtly. It was curious that hitherto she had not found an opportunity of being alone with her hostess for half an hour. Yet there was another subject on which she desired to sound her. But Mrs. Courtly seemed to live in a round of small excitement, of constant and varied occupation, the preparation or execution of schemes for the pleasure of herself and others, or for the benefit of others only. When driving, or walking, or sitting over the fire, she expected some of her men friends to talk to her, just as she held it imperative that some of them should be devoted to her women guests. She had no idea of allowing men to talk together, or of encouraging women to gossip with each other, when the opposite sexes met. And when did they not meet in her house?

On Tuesday morning a cablegram from Mrs. Frampton, which had been delayed two days in consequence of misdirection, announced that she was on the eve of embarkation at Liverpool. As the cablegram was dated the previous Saturday, she might be expected in New York the follow-

ing Friday, and Mordaunt would of course go and meet her. He and Clare would therefore be but two days more under the same roof. Would this precipitate matters?—or would it be the simple termination of a pastime on both sides?

Grace laid her hand on Mrs. Courtly's arm, as they were leaving the dining-room.

"May I come to your boudoir for a few minutes?"

"Why, of course!" and she led the way to that sanctuary of religion and the fine arts, defiled only in one corner by account-books, business letters, and bills of fare.

"I want to ask you a straightforward question," began Grace, plunging boldly into the subject uppermost in her thoughts, without circumlocution. Is Miss Planter a coquette? Is she trifling with my brother, or do you think she cares the least about him?"

Mrs. Courtly smiled one of her sweet enigmatical smiles.

"My dear Miss Ballinger, is Sir Mordaunt trifling with Clare?"

Grace colored.

"You are quite justified in returning my question. I do not believe he is. If they are thrown much more together, I believe he will be rendered

very unhappy should it prove that she cares nothing about him."

"He tells me he must go to New York by the night mail on Thursday."

"Yes, but we are going west after that, and so are the Planters. If I had an inkling of the girl's real character, I might either help him or save him a great deal of pain."

"Clare Planter is a curious girl—in fact, she is an American product, and not like any English girl. It is impossible to tell what she will do. Even her own mother does not know. I know *she* would be quite in your brother's favor, but that would have no weight with Clare, any more than opposition would have. She will probably take a long time to make up her mind as to the man she wishes to marry, but when it is once made up nothing will change her."

"I like that. I could not wish a better answer to my question. So then," she added, laughing, "this desperate flirtation is based, on her part, upon the profoundest principles, and a sense of the importance of knowing a man well before you consent to marry him? Well, I can't disapprove of that—only the man, you see, may suffer in the process."

"Men don't suffer as we do, my dear." She gave a half-suppressed sigh. "At all events, it is never any use interfering in these matters."

"Certainly. If both are bent on this, I would be the last to interfere. But if I thought the girl was leading him on to propose, in order that she may refuse him, I would do all I could, with my aunt's help—she has immense influence with Mordaunt—to save him from a will-o'-the-wisp dance half over America."

"If I understand Clare—which I don't feel certain I do—she will never be the slave of her senses. Flirtation does not affect her in *that* way; she will never be precipitated into an engagement. She is capable of strong attachment, but that is a plant of slow growth. She is genuinely attached to her father. If she marries an Englishman, she will never consent to be as much separated from her parents and her country as so many American women are."

"I am glad of that. Though I confess I think Mrs. Planter a bore, I shouldn't wish her daughter to think so. If you are right, the girl has a great deal of character, and though I see her faults—which are partly those of training and association—I believe her good qualities would preponderate with me in the long run."

"I think they would. She has a rare power—rare even for an American—of adapting herself to the country, the people, the circumstances, which surround her. If she were stuck down in

a ranch in Texas, without a 'help,' I believe she would make the beds and cook the dinner as well as any one—"

"Splendid!" cried Grace, enthusiastically. "I thought her adaptability might be limited to catching the tone of society. I am glad it has a wider range. I begin to hope now that our parting on Thursday may not be final."

"But *you* are not going on Thursday? You stay on with me, I hope, and meet your brother in Boston, when he brings your aunt there."

"Thank you so much, but I have written to Mrs. Barham, to ask if she likes to receive me for a day or two."

Mrs. Courtly opened her eyes. "I suppose you know it is only a very small rectory? I hope you will be comfortable."

"Oh! I am not afraid of that."

"Well, I shall meet you in Boston. I will go to the Vendôme for a few days—I often do so—in order to present you to some of my friends. You should see something of its society while there. But I am so sorry you won't stay longer with me." Then she added, in a low voice, "Quintin Ferrars will be in despair. He has so few friends."

"Yes," said Grace, slowly. "That is a pity, and I am sure it is his own fault. Will you tell me something of his past life? I am interested

in him, otherwise I suppose I should not care what his past had been. He puzzles me. I feel there is something to be explained, he is so very odd. But I have not *le mot de l'énigme.*"

"No one here knows it, but it is quite right *you* should. I meant to have told you before. He married a Spanish woman many years ago, a widow. She was a beautiful creature, I am told, and she had an ample fortune, but she turned out to be thoroughly bad. He left her after a few months, and has never seen her since. She returned to the name of her first husband, and washed her hands of Quintin. He never took a farthing of her money, which she has spent chiefly, they say, on Prince Lamperti—"

"Prince Lamperti! Do you mean that that woman, Madame Moretto, is Mr. Ferrars's wife?"

"Yes, that was her first husband's name."

"Good heavens! that explains his strange conduct in New York. He must have seen his wife once when he left us suddenly, and another time I remember his going out of the room abruptly when the Princess Lamperti entered it. But he is divorced, I suppose?"

"No, not yet. I will tell you the whole story. Very few people knew of his marriage; he has no near relations. He was married abroad, and during the short time he and his wife were to-

gether, he never came to America. When he learned what she was, he was so disgusted and ashamed that, as she chose to return to her first husband's name, he thought it useless to have the scandal of a divorce. He felt sure he should never wish to marry again, himself—he thinks differently now—and so he tried to forget that terrible episode, though it had left him bruised and embittered, to a degree no one who did not know him before can imagine. Lately, the Princess Lamperti, finding it impossible to reclaim her husband, at last decided to divorce him. Whereupon Madame Moretto resolved to come over here, and live in the State of Rhode Island for six months, in order to sue for *her* divorce, on the plea of her husband's desertion and want of 'maintenance,' though, as she is a rich woman, and he comparatively a poor man, that is absurd. But Quintin, of course, did not oppose it; and now he is very, *very* glad. He would have gone on, a miserable, lonely man, to the end of his life, I suppose, if she had not moved in the matter. I hope now he may find consolation and happiness in the course of time."

"He is certainly much to be pitied," said Grace, a little dryly, as it seemed to Mrs. Courtly; "most of all, I think, because his troubles seem to have destroyed his belief in all goodness."

"No, not *all* goodness; only the greater part of what passes as such. I assure you he never doubts yours."

"I had rather he believed in humanity, generally, than in me, whom I suspect he understands very little."

And then Grace turned the subject, and shortly afterwards left the room.

CHAPTER XIV

THE reply to Grace's note, which Mrs. Barham wired back, was to the effect that the Rev. James Barham and she would be delighted to receive Miss Ballinger at Fellbridge on Thursday, for as long as she could find it convenient to remain with them. It was arranged, therefore, that Mordaunt should telegraph to his sister on Mrs. Frampton's arrival, and that they should meet at the Brunswick Hotel in Boston, whichever day her aunt liked to leave New York.

Tuesday and Wednesday passed without event or conversation worth record. Messrs. Laffan and Burton had departed; other visitors came and went, some for the afternoon, some to dine and sleep. Mrs. Courtly's hospitality was great; but she did not resemble the man in the parable, who thought any company was better than none. She was seldom alone, and people of all kinds and all tastes met in her house; but they must have something to recommend them, they must bring some grist to the mill of society. One night

they danced, some boys from Harvard and some girls from Boston having arrived; and to see Mrs. Courtly's light, graceful figure flying round with a beardless youth was really a pretty sight, and did not appear incongruous.

> "'Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety,'"

murmured Quintin Ferrars, as he watched her.

"Yes," Grace replied, "I never knew so many-sided a human being. Nothing seems to come amiss to her — except unkindness." She had grown really fond of her hostess, though two characters more opposed it would have been hard to find.

Since Paul Barham's departure Ferrars had found many opportunities of being alone with Grace, and, even after Mrs. Courtly's revelations, she did not avoid these, for, as she said truly, she was interested in the man, and she pitied him doubly since she knew his story. She did not respect or admire him; but he was clever, and, her very outspoken criticism of his opinions not being taken amiss, it was just possible she might exercise some beneficial influence over him. So he had himself declared, and what woman is there who would refuse to believe such a declaration? After Thursday they might probably never meet

again. If she could do him any good, if any words of hers could alter the current of this unhappy man's feelings towards his fellow-men, she must spare no pains, during the short time that was left her, to effect this.

So when, on that Thursday morning, he asked her to take a last walk with him, she would not refuse. Overhead was a hard, blue sky, like a stone, with yet harder white clouds driven across it by a bitter northeast wind. The shrubs were bowed earthwards; the brown last year's leaves from the garden, the pulverized stone-dust from the road, were swept along till they found refuge in some corner where their relentless driver could no longer flog them.

Grace, clad in her ulster and stalking-cap, did not fear the wind, but, as it rendered talking difficult, she proposed that they should seek the shelter of the fir-wood. There, the turbulence of the wind was only heard in the upper branches; a great quiet reigned over the soft, tawny soil, carpeted with pine-needles, upon which their footsteps fell.

His beginning was not happy.

"Why are you going away? Why do you go and stay with those Barhams, a country minister and his wife, with whom I am sure you can have nothing in common?"

"I like Mrs. Barham and her son very much—that is why I go."

"You will turn that conceited young fellow's head." Then he added, suddenly, without looking at her, "You are the only woman I ever met who seems to have no idea of her own power."

She remained silent for a moment, then said, slowly, "I have not found it so. My life has rather shown me that I have very little."

"With certain people you can do anything you choose," he persisted, "but that is not my point. Of course, many women have that power, for good or ill. My point is that you don't know when you have it—you don't see the tremendous influence you may exercise upon some lives—upon mine, for instance. You may change all my views of life, turn curses into blessings, misery into joy, and you do not see it!"

She was startled; for the first time the truth flashed upon her mind. It was impossible to misunderstand the meaning of those words. This man, in whom she had taken a purely impersonal intellectual interest, whom she had never led, by word, or look, or action, to make love to her; this man, with a wife living, from whom he was not yet divorced, dared to suggest to her the hopes he entertained. A flush of indignation suffused her face. She felt angry with him, and doubly angry with herself for her stupidity.

"You are quite right. *I did not see*, and I do not choose to see now," she said at last. "I told Mrs. Courtly yesterday that you understood me very little; this proves it."

"Why? Is it an offence to say this?"

"It should be so. But let that pass. I repeat that you understand me very little, since you seem to have mistaken the nature of my friendly feeling towards you. I am very sorry if—"

"No—no—don't say you are sorry. . . . I have been precipitate, I know. . . . We are going to part now—and I felt I must speak—that I must tell you how different life has appeared to me since I came to know you well. I have never felt for any woman what I feel for you—"

"You should not say that," she interrupted, quickly. "It is enough that I know your story."

"And have you no pity for me, then? Can you not see how the great deception of my life turned all my feelings into gall, until I met you? Can you not understand my anxiety *now* for freedom—freedom, which I shall obtain in less than six months? Will you not—"

"Stay! Mr. Ferrars. Situated as you are, it is hardly showing much respect for me to use this language. But no matter. Understand me, once for all. If you were fifty times free, it would make no difference in my feelings towards you.

I am sorry you have disturbed the pleasant terms on which we were."

"Will you hold out no hope? No possibility in the future?" he asked, in a low, husky voice.

She shook her head. "None, Mr. Ferrars; none."

"Fool!" he muttered; and, in his sudden passion, he broke the stick in his hand. "Why did I speak? Not from want of respect for you, believe me, but because we were going to part, and I resolved never to follow you—never to persecute you with my presence—unless I had a ray of hope. Just one ray was all I wanted. God! If you knew what it was to be utterly alone in the world, without a creature you care for, or who cares for you!" He flung the two pieces of stick among the trees. "That is all my life is worth now. I was insane enough to fancy it might begin again. That dream is ended. You will forgive me—won't you?"

She made no reply. Platitudes, good advice, were worse than useless at such a moment. Her transient indignation had given place to real sorrow for the man, but to express this would only add fuel to the fire. They had reached a point in the wood where two paths met. At the farther end of one she saw Mordaunt and Miss Planter. Their backs were towards her; they were in deep

conversation, as they slowly paced along. Grace naturally chose the other path, and it was that which led back to the house. When they were yet some yards distant, she said,

"Let all this be forgotten between us; we have both made a mistake. But I hope, by and by, if we should meet again, that you will let me feel the same friendly regard for you that I did before—before you allowed yourself to speak to me of this foolish fancy, which I am sure will pass away."

"Never," he said, in a hoarse voice; "it will never *pass away*—but I promise—I swear to you that you shall not be troubled with this madness of mine again. Let us part here—I can't face all those people—God bless you! You are the best woman I have ever known, and for your sake I shall think better of humanity henceforward."

He wrung her hand, and his face was deadly white as he turned to enter the house by a side door. An hour later he was gone. No one but Mrs. Courtly saw him, and that discreet friend announced at luncheon that Quintin Ferrars had been called suddenly and unexpectedly away.

In the meantime the other two had been walking in the fir-wood for the best part of an hour. If we take up their dialogue during the last ten minutes we shall sufficiently understand what preceded it.

"You say you like no one else?—that there is no other fellow you'd sooner marry?"

"No, there is none. I like you better than Lord Grantham, though I really liked him very much, and better than any one else who has proposed to me in London or New York. I like you awfully, I really *do*. But to marry— Oh! I think a man takes a deal of knowing before one can make up one's mind to marry him."

"Haven't we had exceptional opportunities here of knowing each other? Far better, I'm sure, than if we had spent a season in London or a winter in New York together! I feel I know your bright, sweet nature thoroughly, and—"

"Oh! but you don't. I am ever so full of contradictions. As fast as ever you get hold of one thing, you'll find there's something else quite contrary. I wish a thing, and I don't wish it. Sometimes I fancy I should like to marry an Englishman, and then again I think I should prefer living in my own country. I am not sure about anything, you see, yet, and therefore I mean to go around for quite a time, and feel certain before I settle down."

"I want you to feel certain. But if in six months you don't change your mind—"

"But I have not made up my mind! If I had,

I should not feel like changing it in six months. I am changeable now, but I don't mean to be so by and by. When I was in England, of course I had quite a number of proposals; but, except for Lord Grantham—I think he really *did* like me—I felt pretty sure they only wanted to marry me because they heard papa was rich and I was his only child, and that wasn't good enough for *me*."

"I should think not! I'd marry you gladly if you hadn't a penny—try me. Tell your father not to settle a dollar on you. Men in business—Americans especially, I believe—are not fond of making settlements. I'm not rich, but I've quite enough for us to live on."

"Oh! that is not it. I think I can tell when a man is pretending. And I am sure you are not pretending. All the same," she added, with an arch smile, "I expect your heart would recover if you were told you were never to see me again, though you might feel pretty badly at first."

"I don't say it wouldn't," returned Mordaunt, quick enough to see that frankness was his best policy. "I'm not going to tell a lot of humbug about my heart being broken, which you wouldn't believe. Of course, I have flirted a good deal. A guardsman of eight-and-twenty must have had some affairs. You wouldn't believe me if I said I hadn't. But I have never been hard hit till

now. I am honestly and heartily in love with you. I think you are the dearest girl in the world, and I shall go on persevering as long as I see you don't prefer another fellow. If you *do*, I shall be awfully cut up, though I shall try and prevent the world's seeing it; and, I suppose, in the course of time, I shall marry some one else, who throws her cap at me. She'll have to make the running. I sha'n't be a bit in love."

"Mamma says love is not necessary at first—that it grows and strengthens after marriage—that violent fancies are seldom lasting."

"You run no danger of that kind, apparently," was his reproachful reply. "You speak as if you had no heart."

"I don't know if I have one, or not. If I was sure I had, I would marry the man right away who made me sure. And when I feel sure I have *not*, I shall marry—well, I suppose any one."

"For ambition?"

"Perhaps."

There was a long silence. Irrepressible, "bumptious," as he was often called, Mordaunt Ballinger on this occasion was reduced to silence. His eyes bent upon the ground, his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his ulster, he kicked the fir-cones with his yellow leather boots as they paced the wood, while the girl, erect, keen-sighted, with a

brilliant color on her fair cheek, glanced at him from time to time, and then away through the red-stemmed pines to where the blue smoke curled up from the chimneys of the house.

It was she who spoke first.

"Where are you going after Boston?"

"To Colorado. And you? Do you remain at Pittsburgh till the spring?"

"I think not. It doesn't agree with mamma. Perhaps we may go to the Pacific Slope."

"Where is that? Don't laugh. Do you mean California?"

"Why, of course. Don't the hills slope down to the Pacific?"

"And where do you stop there?"

"Possibly at Monterey; just the loveliest place in the whole world, I believe."

"I think we might come too. I didn't mean to go so far, but if—if you—would like—"

"Like? Why, of course I should! It would be just delightful! We would have a real good time, wandering by that lovely shore, watching the seals, and driving through the cypress forest. I shall expect to meet you there."

"Then I shall come."

That afternoon, the brother and sister parted at the Boston Railway Station, when Mordaunt saw his sister and her maid into a train which would

deposit them in half an hour at Fellbridge, the small town of which the Rev. Joseph Barham was the rector.

But little had passed between Grace and Mordaunt. Clare Planter's name had not been mentioned. The two girls had parted with cordiality, when Clare had said, "I hope we may meet in California. Your brother says we shall."

"Indeed?" Grace replied. "I did not know he meant to go as far." Then she added, with emphasis, "If *you* wish it, I hope we may."

She sought no explanation from Mordaunt; she respected his reticence, understood his rather forced hilarity at moments, and then his long lapses into silence. It was better so; she did not much believe in confidences.

Mr. Barham met his English visitor at the Fellbridge Station, and while her maid waited to accompany the porter who was to wheel her box on a truck down the street, the minister conducted Grace to the rectory.

He was a tall, handsome man of five-and-forty, with hair still untouched with gray, which may have helped to make a middle-aged face, in which high cheek-bones and a prominent chin were the chief defects, look somewhat hard. The silver that years scatters on our head is a wondrous softener, as silver, in life, is so often found to be.

He greeted the young Englishwoman with a grave, old-fashioned courtesy to which she was unaccustomed.

"This visit is a pleasure to which Mrs. Barham has been looking forward for several weeks, Miss Ballinger. You will take us as we are, simple folk, living in a simple way. You can have expected nothing else in coming to a minister's house, so I make no apologies. We will make you as comfortable as we can, and show you what little there is to see in our neighborhood."

They stopped before a green-painted wooden house, in no way dissimilar from its fellows in the long, wide street. It stood in a "yard," perhaps a quarter of an acre square, with half a dozen stripling trees and a bush or two irregularly dispersed round it. Fence or paling there was none, dividing it from the road or from its neighbors. It had a "piazza," or covered balcony, running along the front, in which grew two shrubs in pots, but there was no border or bed of brown frozen earth telling of a past-summer's garden. The exterior was certainly discouraging.

Mrs. Barham, who had been watching at the window for them, came to the door herself, but not before it had been opened by an Irish parlor-maid, with an aroma of Tipperary still hanging about her. Her very hair seemed to have a

brogue. But behind her shone the sweet, glad face of Saul's mother, and two delicate hands which Grace declared she would have recognized anywhere, were extended to greet her.

The interior of the house presented some pleasant features, indicative of work and home life. On this account it seemed to Grace more cheerful than many of the sumptuous dwellings she had visited in New York. The "parlor" had books on one table, Mrs. Barham's work-basket on another, her writing-materials and letters on a third. There was no open fire-place, and the heat from the stove struck Grace as oppressive, coming from the sharp air of the February afternoon. But she was beginning to get acclimatized to the atmosphere of American hotels, railway-cars, and most private houses, Brackly being an exception.

She threw open her fur jacket as she sat down.

"How nice it is to see you again—and to be under your roof!" she exclaimed.

"It was lovely of you to offer yourself, Miss Ballinger. . . . I am afraid you find the room too warm? Won't you take your jacket right off?" Then calling, "Molly! you might bring the tea, and—Molly! some blueberry jam, if you please, and the Boston crackers. Joseph"—this to her husband, who, divested of his great-coat and overshoes, now entered the parlor—an honor he rarely

paid that apartment till the evening—"I hope you feel like coming to sit down here, and having a quiet cup of tea with us? He does work so hard, Miss Ballinger. I am so glad to get him away from his study and his parish-work for half an hour."

Mr. Barham did not reply to this. He sat down stiffly, crossed his legs, and said,

"We expect our son presently."

"You saw him on Sunday?" asked Mrs. Barham, anxiously. "Did you think him looking ill?"

"Hardly as well as on board ship—but that was natural."

"His heart is in his work, and he works too hard," sighed the mother.

"He does his duty. He can do no less. You observe that Mrs. Barham has 'work' on the brain," said the father, with just so much upward inclination of the curves of the mouth as might, by courtesy, be called a smile. "That which a man's hand finds to do should be done with all his might. I should regret if a son of mine thought otherwise."

"Ah, Joseph, but with Saul you know very well that though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak."

"Saul is free to do as he will. I do not coerce

him. He has an independence. He may travel on the continent of Europe till he is strong—and you may go with him. I have told you both so, quite a number of times, but he prefers to work at home, and now that he has gotten this professorship I guess it will be hard to induce him to give it up. He has the grit of a true American, Miss Ballinger. He won't cave in till he is forced."

"Then I hope you will force him—if his health suffers."

"Thank you for saying that," said Mrs. Barham, eagerly. "My husband is just as anxious as I am about our son, but he won't speak. He says a man must work out the problem of life for himself. I say we old ones should help the young with our experience."

Molly here entered, staggering under a tea-tray laden with the teapot and crackers and jam. She set it down, sweeping to right and left the books on the table; then, with a mighty sigh, which seemed as though it would burst every button in her bodice, she placed her arms akimbo, and stood awaiting further instructions.

"You might bring some milk, Molly," observed Mrs. Barham, in mild remonstrance. Then, lifting the lid of the teapot, "Are you sure the water boiled?"

"Faith, m'm, I thought ye wanted your tay in a hurry, and for once it didn't matther."

A distressed look came over her mistress's face. "It always *must* boil, Molly. I have told you so before. Could not the cook have put it on the fire sooner?"

"She an' me was helpin' Pat Malone wid the lady's box, which was that big we had the divil's own work to get it upstairs, m'm."

"Do not speak of the devil's work in that light way," said her master, sternly.

"I wasn't manein' to sphake of him in a light way, sorr, for indade it was mighty heavy, and—"

"Well," interrupted her mistress, quickly, "you might run and make some fresh tea—for this is hardly warm; and mind the water *boils* this time." Having thus got rid of the irrepressible Hibernian housemaid, Mrs. Barham turned to her guest, with a piteous smile. "These helps are our greatest trial. They come over here raw—very raw—material. If one gets an honest girl like this, one must put up with her faults. One dare not get rid of her for fear of getting something worse."

The shrill whistle of a steam-engine was now heard, not far distant.

"That is the train from Cambridge," said Saul's mother.

CHAPTER XV

Of the quartette that sat down to dinner that evening—a homely dinner, without pretension—three at least were in the best of spirits, and ready to laugh over Molly's peculiar methods of service. Mr. Barham had little sense of humor; in that respect, at least, he was not American; he took life very gravely. It needed all his son's fire to keep things alight in so damp an atmosphere. But Saul's cheek was flushed; he was voluble, excited! Grace had never seen him so brilliant, so evidently happy and at his ease. For here he was at home, with no carping listeners; he could give his fun and fancy play, and this was the occasion which he had thought of so often, and which he had desired so keenly to bring about, during the past two months. It was not in his father's power to depress him to-night. Had he not that gracious, delightful creature opposite, all to himself? No Jem Gunning beside her, as at the *Teutonic* board, nor cynic Ferrars, as at Brackly. His empire, for a few brief hours at least, was undivided.

Molly, having heaved a joint down before the master, whispered very audibly to the mistress,

"Will ye be doin' y'r own stretchin', m'm, for a few minutes, whiles I fetch the praties and squab pie?"

Grace made as though she heard not, but Saul laughed outright, as the girl scuttled from the room.

"You have no idea, Miss Ballinger, what Molly is, until you have seen her in the presence of an Irish patriot. We had one here last week. I may as well own to you"—here he gave a droll glance at the minister, whose stern glance was riveted on the joint, which he was endeavoring to penetrate with a plated knife*—"I may as well own to you that my father has Home Rule proclivities. So he offered Mr. ——— hospitality, when he and his colleagues were down here, on their Propaganda tour, last week. Molly outdid herself on that occasion."

"I can believe it," laughed Grace, "from what she said to me."

"What she said to you?" cried Mrs. Barham. "Why, when?"

"Before dinner. I found her haranguing my

* Economy of labor has almost abolished the use of steel knives throughout the United States.

maid upon the wrongs of 'ould Ireland,' and upon the privilege I enjoyed of sleeping in the bed which had been occupied by 'the biggest Irish pathriot, barrin' Misther Parnell,' a few days ago. When I entered, she continued in the same strain, and assured me, 'There is nothin' changed but the sheets since the blessed man lay here—an' sure y'r dreams will be all the sweeter, miss, for knowin' it.'"

Mrs. Barham and Saul laughed heartily; Mr. Barham alone was silent. When he spoke, it was to say, gravely,

"One cannot expect English persons to feel as we do on this subject. Few take a dispassionate view of questions that touch their own interests."

"Very few," said his son, smiling. "You were an abolitionist because you were a Northerner, and did not possess slaves. Rives from New Orleans, who is ruined, swears the colored people were far happier, more prosperous, better educated and cared for, in a state of slavery than they now are. It all depends, as you say, on the point of view."

"I am no politician," said Grace, "but I was in Ireland five years ago, and again last year, and I was struck with the improved aspect of the people, of the land, of everything, since Mr. Balfour's

reign. That is the only 'point of view' *I* have, but I dare say I am quite wrong. Women have capital instincts—I think my own instincts about people are almost unerring; but my opinions on other subjects are generally worth nothing. My aunt always says so."

"That is, no doubt, when they differ from hers," observed Saul, with a smile.

"My aunt is a very clever woman, with decided views about everything in heaven above and in the earth beneath. She cannot tolerate compromise, or shilly-shallying, or weakness of any kind. She often upbraids me for not disliking people more cordially than I do. If I don't like them, they are indifferent to me. So few seem worth hating—at least, judged by the aspect they present to the world. Of course, one *may* entertain murderers, as well as angels, unawares."

"You hated Lady Clydesdale, I think—just a *little?* I hear she is in Boston."

"I hope I sha'n't meet her. Is she popular there?"

"She is a clever woman in her way, and holds the same views that some of our advanced women do—only samer. Then she is a countess." Here he smiled. "Well, now, you have an English countess coming with the most democratic and subversive ideas among us stanch republicans.

You must confess there is something fascinating about it."

"I can't say, not being a republican. I only know *she* is not fascinating. Her manners are odious, and then she has a most uncharitable tongue. She is just the sort of woman to give the worst impression of an English lady to foreigners."

"Do you call us foreigners?"

She laughed.

"What do you call yourselves? I am quite ready to accept your own definition."

"We call ourselves your sixth cousins—once removed."

"Very well; then you must not expect the privileges that attach to aliens."

"What are they? I never heard of them."

"Oh! it is a small matter, but one which some of your countrymen cavil at—the question of precedence. If we treat them as of our own family, and follow our own laws of etiquette, I have heard them say it was discourteous."

"Then they were fools—*non raggionam' di lor.* Republicans should be above such rubbish as that."

"'The first shall be last, and the last shall be first!'" said his father, looking up from the havoc of meat before him.

The conversation was carried on chiefly between

Saul and Grace. Mrs. Barham occasionally put in her oar, a gentle tentative stroke, never out of time, never impeding progress; but the main work was in the hands of the two strong young pullers. The minister said but little. The talk was of things concerning which he knew nothing, or the echo of which, at most, had reached him from a distance, without awakening much interest. In his narrow sphere, where there was no circulating library, and where he rarely came into contact with a mind which had left the beaten highroads, along which its possessor jogged contented daily to his business or his farm, the air was exhausted, vitiated. There was no free current of thought as in more spacious centres of activity, where men meet, discuss, and learn the lessons that are taught by friction. Not that the village was a dream of idyllic peace, or free from the jealousies that are born of theological controversy. How could it be otherwise in a comparatively small community, which boasted, besides the Episcopal church, of a Unitarian, a Baptist, a first Methodist, a second Methodist, and a Congregational chapel. It was astonishing that they all fared as well together as they did; but, in the nature of things, discussion and criticism constantly arose, and it was Mr. Barham's misfortune that these conflicts of opinion never tended to

enlarge his own strongly fortified views, for the minds with which he had to deal were all distinctly inferior to his own. Endowed with considerable capacity, combative, obstinate, and unswerving in rectitude and his idea of duty, he might, under different circumstances, have become a modern St. Paul. At least, so his son said. But then St. Paul had been, as we know, buffeted about a good deal, in the course of which process he had acquired considerable knowledge of the world. It is true that, like St. Paul, Mr. Barham was neither diffident nor humble. It was possible to conceive that he might, at the close of his life, say, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." But he never could have written, "I am made all things to all men," for a more uncompromising opponent in discussion, or one who less understood the wisdom of yielding in small things, never stepped the earth.

Between Saul and his father there were differences of opinion on other subjects than that of Home Rule; but the son, while he had inherited some of Mr. Barham's obstinacy and tenacity of purpose, had a more plastic mind, and possessed the invaluable capacity of being able to hold his tongue. Thus he never argued with his father, knowing that it would be useless to assail the bul-

warks behind which his opinions were intrenched, and doubly reluctant, now that he had left home, to enter into controversy which might leave some soreness of feeling behind it. The father respected his son—his character, his attainments, the estimation in which he knew Saul was held. Therein lay the young man's strength. But for this, it could hardly have been that altercation should not have arisen, from time to time, between a man of so dominant a disposition as Mr. Barham and the one human being who had grown up under his direct influence, and upon whom it might be expected he would have imposed his views. A little gentle banter, as on this occasion, was all that the young professor ever permitted himself towards his father; and this the minister received much as a majestic Newfoundland does the bark of a puppy. It was beneath his notice.

"My father, you see, has become a total abstainer lately," he said to Grace, towards the end of dinner, "and it is no use my mother's quoting St. Paul to him, 'Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake.' The pitchers of ice-water he consumes in a day would float a lugger. I have remarked to him occasionally that excesses in ice-water are as pernicious — or perhaps more so — as in spirits; but my words of wisdom fall on inattentive ears."

Grace replied, "All I know is, we were specially warned against falling into the habit, when we came to America. As to my aunt, she thinks there are 'germs' or 'microbes,' or something, in every glass, and would sooner die of thirst, I believe, than drink water which she could not trace to its very source."

Even the minister himself smiled at this, but he did not attempt to argue the point; it was not worth while. His attitude throughout the evening was the same—that of a listener, standing somewhat aloof from the subjects discussed; rarely a participator in the discussion. The ground they traversed was never personal. Grace felt that her curiosity about the young professor's views and aspirations must be curbed in the presence of his father, before whom she instinctively knew he would not speak openly.

The next morning Saul returned to his work, and Mrs. Barham proposed taking Grace to visit that magnificent female university, Wellesley College, which was only a short distance by rail. It far surpasses, in extent and scope, as Grace found, any similar institution in England. Seven hundred girls were receiving instruction from the very best professors, in classics, modern languages, literature, science, and art, according to their proclivities and the object each had in view.

The main building, and the fine park in which it stands, were the donation of a man who lost his only child, and devoted his vast fortune to the erection and endowment of this college. For three hundred dollars yearly, a girl has every privilege belonging to it — including bed and board; and the education of the body is no less well cared for than that of the mind. There is a gymnasium and a big lake, where the girls row in summer-time and skate in winter. They looked blooming and merry, this bright February morning, flying over the ice, their young voices, pitched in a high key, rippling along the sharpened air as they pursued each other.

Their English visitor was exceedingly interested. The aspect of the place and of the students alike charmed her; it was so cheerful, so far removed from the sternness of the Academic Grove. Here each girl seemed to be pursuing with enthusiasm, and with a joyousness of spirit that struck Grace as wholly un-English, the studies she had selected as likely to be most serviceable to her in after-life. There was no enforced "curriculum," no obligatory course of learning. A high standard of excellence in each department stimulated the energies and the ambition of the students; it seemed in no instance to have crushed them. The common objection made to women taking up seri-

ous studies, that it unfits them for domestic life, and in many instances frightens away the would-be suitor, was effectually answered when Grace was told that nearly every girl who had taken a high degree, and had left the college meaning to earn her livelihood by mental labor, had married within a few months, and had settled down, contented, in the home that had been offered her.

"Are all these girls of one class?" asked Grace of Mrs. Barham.

"No; some are the daughters of rich men, who have no need to work for their living. The greatest proportion, of course, mean to become governesses, for whom there is a great and constantly increasing demand. Some, again, will become doctors, some designers, and so on. Quite a number become writers for the periodicals or for the daily press."

"Oh! I hope they don't become interviewers, like that dreadful Miss Clutch, who forced herself on me in New York?"

"Why, no, I should think not, for their refining education must render such a course most repulsive. But then, all interviewers are not like Miss Clutch; you must not think it. Some of them are quite ladies, who would never force themselves on any one."

"Who was the visitor with a charming face, whom you introduced to me as Miss Forster?"

"She is quite a friend of mine, though we do not often meet, who is greatly interested in the college, and visits there every week. It is an object, you see, for a woman who is alone in the world. I often think what I should do without my husband and my son."

"Alone in the world!" That was what Quintin Ferrars had called himself. It was the second time within a few days that the phrase had forced itself upon her, and this time it struck her like a blow. Would not she be "alone in the world," when Mordy had taken unto himself a wife, and no longer needed her? She would never marry for expediency's sake, or for any reason but one. Therefore, it seemed tolerably sure now that she would be left "alone in the world." How strange, that when two people cared for each other—and she knew, no matter what she might say to Mordy, that Ivor Lawrence *did* care for her—how strange that a mistaken pride should be suffered to divide them! But then, might there not also be mistaken pride on her part, which had held her back hitherto from writing?

As these thoughts sped through her mind, in the train, on their way back, Mrs. Barham observed the far-away look on her companion's face,

and was silent. That evening, on Saul's return home to dinner, this self-communing bore unexpected fruit in the course of her conversation with the young man. They were sitting alone in the twilight, both Saul's parents being out of the room. He coughed a good deal, and looked ill, the excitement of the previous evening having passed; and, without showing the concern she felt, she questioned him as to his health and his work.

"I am afraid you take too much out of yourself."

"I can't do less," he replied. "If I was at home here, doing nothing, I should be much worse. I must have work; and my best relaxation is to discuss things with my friends, men whose ways of thought are congenial with mine. My father's, you see, are not. He is a splendid man. I admire and respect him immensely. But we both avoid discussion, knowing that neither will ever convince the other. So it would never do for me to live at home."

"I can understand that. Family controversy is always disagreeable. Have you, at Harvard, any friend with whom you are really intimate?—any one towards whom you feel as a brother?"

"Yes, one; a man to whom I am not afraid of speaking openly on nearly every subject, feeling

sure he will understand, even if he does not agree with me."

There was a pause. Grace, who rarely hesitated, hesitated now before she said,

"If that friend had done something which you could not understand, something which seemed incompatible with his character, and that he remained silent, that he explained nothing, what would you do? Would you write to him? Or would you, rather, say, 'I will not allow my trust to be shaken because I do not understand his conduct. He has his own reasons for remaining silent. It is not for me to force an explanation from him.'"

He looked at her fixedly for a moment, then answered, in his decided way,

"There is a higher trust than that implied by silence—the confidence that my friend will not misunderstand me. I should certainly speak. If he says, 'I can tell you nothing,' that is enough. My trust would remain unshaken; but I am bound, by that very trust, to speak openly to him, not to let the shadow of misapprehension exist between us."

"Those are brave words. I believe you are right. False pride often prevents such directness in real life, and," she added, with a smile, "still more often in novels. But, of course, there may

be a complication of causes, which renders it more difficult to speak in—in some cases than in others."

"Of course; but I fancy the difficulty depends more upon the character of the speaker than the circumstances. You, for instance, might speak to any one whom you had really made your *friend* without fear of misconception, no matter under what circumstances."

She looked away. "I am glad you think that. I shall remember your words."

Here Molly burst into the room, with a telegram for Grace in one hand, and a paraffine lamp, which in her haste she nearly upset, in the other.

"The bhoy's a-waitin' for the answer, bekase it's paid for."

The telegram ran thus,

"Aunt Susan arrived. Gone to the Hurlstones. Can meet you to-morrow in Boston, if you do not wish to stay till Monday where you are."

She wrote in pencil on the blank form,

"Will meet you and Aunt Susan on Monday. Very happy here."

Then she handed both to the young professor.

"I am taking it for granted that your father and mother do not want to get rid of me."

"Have we not got beyond conventional phrases?

I shall not answer that, except to remind you that Sunday is the only day I can pass here. To-morrow my mother has promised to bring you over to lunch at Cambridge, where I will ask a few of our prominent men to meet you, and afterwards show you Harvard College."

That programme for the following day was carried out very satisfactorily to all concerned. The distance by rail was short; the day, though intensely cold, was fine; the atmosphere, through which the brown skeletons of the trees stood up against the pale blue background, was clear. Perspectives of possible beauty when the gracious spring should clothe these skeletons with tender green, and carpet, with blade and blossom, the iron-bound earth, arose before Grace's eyes. Hitherto she had been disappointed. She had looked for bigger trees, higher hills, less tameness and monotony than she found in the New England landscape. I know not on what grounds she had built her expectations, but the reality certainly fell short of them. This short railway journey, however, carried her past spots of undeniable picturesqueness, where little streams, like silvery trout, twirled and darted through the red logwood and yellow reeds and sedges. She could conceive how pretty much of it must be in summer.

At the station, of what the guide-book calls "the great academic city," Saul met them. Their walk through the main street and villa-fringed highways to the small house where the young professor and a friend lived together gave Grace rather the impression of a suburb, an accretion of well-to-do residences that have grown and spread out from some great centre. And, though "well-to-do," those residences, as a rule, did not convey to English eyes much idea of comfort. The impossibility of any privacy in dwellings standing in "yards," unseparated from each other, and undefended even by the conventional grove of laurel, was a shock to her insular, and no doubt un-Christian, prejudices. When Grace passed the homes of the great men whose names were household words to her, she marvelled, until she remembered that genius is never dependent on its surroundings.

The luncheon party was most agreeable—the five men asked to meet the ladies being not only very able in different ways, but knowing how to make their abilities serviceable to social use, as is not always the case even with the cleverest Englishmen. After luncheon most of them had to hurry off; one, however, agreed to accompany the ladies and Saul round the university. Mrs. Barham naturally fell to him; Saul and Grace walked

on in front, through the grand Memorial Hall, the University Library, the fine architectural gymnasium. Grace was properly enthusiastic.

"Harvard surpasses my expectations," she said. "I can understand your being very happy here."

"I do not think I said I was very happy," he replied. "But if I am not, the fault, no doubt, is in myself."

She looked up at him, and saw, with concern, how wan and tired he looked. He had been flushed and in brilliant spirits all the morning. He coughed at times, but then she had never known him without a cough. Now her old fear returned. But of what use was it to speak? It was clear that he would not relax in his work, still less give it up and seek a milder climate. Like the Pompeiian sentinel, he would die at his post, but never flee. Neither spoke for some minutes. Their thoughts were upon very different lines; she had forgotten his last words, and failed to see the connection of ideas when he said,

"I am not a philosopher, you see. I cannot accept the inevitable. When a thing is beyond a man's reach he ought not even to think about it."

"But isn't it because you do not think enough of the plain, simple thing—I would say the *duty*—that is within your reach, that you are troubled

about the unattainable? Those old Romans were so wise when they said that 'a healthy mind' depended on 'a healthy body.' You ought to leave off work—I am sure you ought—and go 'right away,' as you say here, and get quite strong before you return to this trying climate. You should do this for your mother's sake. If you resist *her* appeal, with her sweet, suffering face, of course no words of mine can be of any avail."

For a minute it seemed as though he had not heard her. His brow was knit, his lips tight clenched; he walked on without turning his head. Then, catching his breath as he spoke, he said, in a low voice,

"On the contrary. If you told me to go—to follow you—anywhere—I would do it. That is the only thing that would make me throw up my professorship."

She was painfully startled; she had not in the least anticipated this. She knew—what woman does not?—that she was admired; but their intercourse had been of such a purely friendly nature, it had never occurred to her that this young man, in whom she had not hesitated to show her deep interest, secretly nourished a far stronger feeling. They were just the same age; yet to her, in spite of his decision and force of character, he had seemed much younger. Poor

fellow! Oh, the pity of it! That, ill as she knew him to be, she must speak words which must wound him, words which sounded cruel even in her own ears.

"That is a responsibility I could never undertake. I can only advise you as a friend, a friend of your mother's as of yours. I can only tell you what it seems to me it is right you should do. Beyond that, I cannot direct your future."

"Of course. I never thought you would," he said, in a low voice, as they entered the Memorial Hall.

His mother touched her on the shoulder at the same moment.

"Those are Lafarge's famous windows," she said. "How do you like them?"

CHAPTER XVI

Saul did not return to Fellbridge that evening with his mother and Grace. Mrs. Barham, indeed, urged him not to do so, seeing how ill he looked, and he yielded without a word. His mother enjoined him to rest, and to go to bed early, "for you look just fairly worn out, Saul."

And when they were in the train, she turned to Grace, with a deep sigh, and said,

"He has gotten back that ashy color which he had before he went abroad. And his cough; did you hear how he coughed? Oh, Miss Ballinger, I am so down-hearted about my only boy, the only one left!"

She turned her face away, but it was not to hide any tears in her stone-blue eyes. Her anxiety, her grief were far too deep for wailing.

Grace pressed silently the small gloved hand that lay on the poor mother's lap. She felt as though she were, in a measure, responsible for Saul's condition. With a word she could send him away to some sunny clime, where he might

revive, as it seemed almost certain to her he would not do here. But she could never speak that word.

Grace had rarely found it so hard to be cheerful as this evening. When she looked at the handsome but rigid face of her reverend host, and thought of "Little Mother" confronted by some great sorrow, with no solace but in the stern Calvinism of her husband, the girl shivered. It was probably a difficult evening to all three. The minister, who had no special anxiety about his son, exerted himself to supply the young man's place, but he felt himself to be an inefficient substitute, in conversation with his English guest. As to "Little Mother," she did her duty bravely; but it made Grace's heart ache to look into those deep, sad eyes—sad, even when the lips smiled and she spoke lightly of indifferent matters.

When she went to her room that night, Grace sat down and wrote a letter. Its composition did not take her long; indeed, it may be said that every word of it had been burned into her brain many months ago. She had desired exceedingly, at that time, to write to Ivor Lawrence, and she had refrained. Again in New York, after Mordaunt had broached the subject once more, the impulse to tell the friend, who was laboring un-

der a foul aspersion, how deeply she felt for him had been strong; but still, moved by her brother's indignant remonstrance, she had forborne. And now, it was strange, but Saul's few words, and the reproach of her pusillanimity they carried with them, had upset all this. The forcible way in which he had confirmed her instinct—and, like most women, she believed in her instincts—decided her.

This is what she wrote:

"FELLBRIDGE, MASS., U. S.,
"18*th February*, 1891.

"MY DEAR MR. LAWRENCE,—I know you too well to doubt that you have some good and sufficient motive in your own eyes for having entirely given up all communication with your friends, since this dark cloud has hung over you. That you should wilfully deprive yourself of the personal sympathy of those who would never for an instant believe you capable of a dishonorable action—no matter the amount of testimony brought against you—seems to me strange. I have waited, but waited in vain, all these months, for a line that should tell me that you trusted in my friendship; that you felt certain I could never doubt your rectitude and truth. I have been disappointed. But, since it has seemed good to you to be silent, I do not see that a corresponding silence is imposed upon me; and, after some misgiving, at the risk of appearing obtrusive, I write to assure you that you have friends who watch with intense interest, but without *anxiety*, your present fight with calumny and suspicion. They

never doubt but that you will come triumphantly through this ordeal. My taking up my pen to say this may seem to you a very uncalled-for step on my part, but, as I think you know me well, I am not in the least afraid of your misinterpreting it. I cannot longer allow a friend, whom I value, to suffer as I know you must be suffering, without a word to tell him of my unwavering confidence and cordial sympathy. Sincerely yours,

"GRACE BALLINGER.

"P.S.—We are travelling in the United States, and shall not return to England before May."

She felt more tranquil after writing this than she had done for a long time. The endeavor to put the subject away from her had failed. In the watches of the night it had come back, and upbraided her, no matter by what specious arguments she had striven to persuade herself that it was unfitting she should write. She knew her heart and intellect did not subscribe to conventional laws, though in traffic with the world her habitual conduct did so. But this was an exceptional case. Her aunt, her brother, could never understand it, because they did not understand Ivor Lawrence's peculiar character. It was that character which, after his strange behavior, justified this action in her own eyes. Upon no other man could she have *forced* her sympathy. He had loved her—she felt sure of that, she could not be mistaken—and yet he had never spoken of

his love. To most women this would have been a cause of misgiving, if not of offence and bitterness. It was not so to this strange girl. She felt that she could comprehend it all—the pride that kept him silent as long as he was a poor and briefless barrister, and that shrank still further from avowal when his name was branded with infamy. But the world had not comprehended; her own kith and kin had been indignant. To one and all the man's behavior had seemed disgraceful. He had paid Grace such marked attention for months as had kept other and better men aloof; then, on inheriting this vast fortune, had completely dropped her! And half this fortune must be his, it was said, even if the verdict in the approaching trial should be given against him, as an earlier will had been found, dividing Mr. Tracy's property equally between his two nephews. It was thus, as Grace knew, that her friends argued; and every effort to make them see the circumstances in a different light would be of no avail.

The next day, Sunday, Saul appeared soon after morning service. He looked as if he had not slept all night, and he coughed a great deal; but, by a resolute effort of will, he talked very much as usual. Grace should not be distressed during her last day, nor should "Little Mother,"

by his depression of spirits. After all, how was he worse off now than when Grace arrived here? He knew then—he had known all along—how utterly hopeless was his attachment. He had been surprised, like a fool, into an avowal of his feelings, and he bitterly regretted it. A thin screen of ice had formed itself, since then, between him and her. Nothing, now, could melt that; but, at least, the last hours of their intercourse under his father's roof should be as little constrained as possible, under the circumstances.

At parting, as he held her hand for an instant, he said, quite simply,

"If we never meet again, Miss Ballinger, pray remember that you brought happiness into at least one obscure New England home. We shall think of your visit here with gratitude, and often talk of it, my mother and I. Good-by."

Firm, self-contained to the end, his voice betrayed no emotion, as he raised her hand respectfully to his lips. She said nothing. What could she say? Then he turned; the white face, the shrunk, shadowy figure, vanished in the gloaming; and that was the last she saw of Saul Barham.

In a ground-floor "parlor" at the Brunswick, late the following afternoon—a parlor that was

heavily decorated and brilliant with electric light, Grace fell into Mrs. Frampton's expansive embrace. It was a bitterly cold day, and the cheek which her niece pressed seemed frozen. It belonged to a short, stout woman, still almost as vigorous as at twenty, with iron-gray hair, that rose in crisp waves, and broke over the broad, prominent forehead, indicating stubborn natural force. Swift black eyes, a healthy color, fine white teeth, told the same tale of strong vitality. The expanded nostrils, and full mobile mouth, showed perhaps other, but not contradictory, characteristics.

Impossible to doubt that this was a clever, dominant, possibly at times a violent woman; attractive to some, to others a terror and a *bête noir*. Voluble, beyond the limits of discretion, yet rarely foolish; impulsive as a child; loving and hating with equal intensity; yet prudent, worldly-wise, humorous, and quick-sighted, it was not difficult to form an idea, more or less just, of Mrs. Frampton in five minutes' conversation. But then, as her nephew said, "Aunt Susan always lets herself go." It was that quality of "letting herself go" which made her so entertaining a companion.

She spoke rapidly, in a high but not unmusical voice, holding her niece out at arm's-length after

embracing her, while she scanned the girl's countenance.

"You look well, my child! This horrible climate agrees with you, then? I have been shrivelling up visibly every hour since I landed. And then the awful heat of these furnaces! I thought I should be roasted alive in the railway-carriage coming here! How can you stand it?"

"I grin and bear it as well as I can, Aunt Su. And as to the climate, I like this dry cold a great deal better than the damp and fog of London."

She shrugged her shoulders. "'Quel drôle de goût!' as the irreverent Frenchman said when some one spoke of the Jews as 'God's chosen people.' Mordy has been talking the same nonsense. As if the London climate was not good enough for any living creature, except, perhaps, an asthmatic poodle! My nerves are all rasped here. I hate it."

"Well, aunty, we won't rasp you more by saying anything about the climate, but we mean to make you like the country very much."

"Never!" she cried, in a melodramatic tone. "Except the Hurlstones' house, everything I have seen is hideous. Those dreadful streets! You didn't say half enough about those dreadful New York streets. I felt as if every bone in my body was dislocated, when I drove through them!

And then their way of spitting about one! There was one man who actually aimed across me at a spittoon! Pray, have you got accustomed to *that?*"

"I never see it," returned Grace, with a smile. "You know I am one of those stupid but happy people who don't see ugly things, unless they are thrust under their very nose."

"Well, my dear, this *was* thrust under my very nose. No, I hate all I have seen of the people, except the Hurlstones. I except *them*, for they are thoroughly well-bred, nice people, and their house is charming."

"There are plenty of houses as good—indeed better, to my taste—and plenty of people as nice."

"You didn't do them justice, Gracey, in your letters to me. They are a charming family. I was most agreeably surprised in Beatrice Hurlstone. She would hold her own in any London drawing-room."

"I didn't say she would not, aunty. I am sure I said nothing against them. I was very grateful for all their kindness and hospitality."

"Oh! grateful. We know what *that* means. You didn't like them, and you put Mordy off from liking the girl."

"My dear aunt! What nonsense! As if anything I could say would influence him in the slight-

est degree in that way! He flirted with her at first, and then he found some one he admired more."

"That is just it. If he *will* marry an American, I'd rather it was Beatrice Hurlstone than any one. I don't at all like the idea of Miss Planter, whom he raves to me about. He sha'n't marry her, if I can help it. In the first place, I am told she is a desperate flirt. Then her father is one of those speculators who is rich to-day and may be poor to-morrow, and will only give his daughter an income—will settle nothing upon her. Whereas Mr. Hurlstone's large fortune will be divided equally between his son and his daughter—he told me so himself."

"That was considerate of him," said Grace, with one of her rare touches of sarcasm.

And the hero of their talk entering the room at that moment, there was an abrupt change in the conversation.

"I find her looking very well, Mordy!" cried his aunt. "Is it the New England parsonage that has given her those roses? She looked like a squeezed lemon four months ago."

"Oh! twenty-four hours at sea picked her up. She is an awfully good sailor and never missed a meal; and amused herself, I can tell you, 'pretty considerable,' as we say over here—having three men, all very much gone on her."

Mrs. Frampton laughed heartily.

"And you have been staying with the parents of one of them—the young man you say is a prig?"

"I didn't say that," responded Grace, quickly. "I said *you* might call him so. He is a very remarkable young man, and I like him exceedingly; but I am much afraid he will not live long. He is sadly changed, even since we were on board ship together. His poor mother's face haunts me. He is her only son."

The mocking expression of Aunt Susan's countenance changed while her niece was speaking. The eyes were veiled with a tender sympathy, which contrasted curiously with their habitual outlook. She, too, had known what this sorrow meant, long years ago.

"Poor woman! And is there nothing to be done?"

"Perhaps if he went to a warm climate, and gave up his professorship, he might recover, but that is just what he won't do."

"Then he doesn't really love his mother!" she cried, impatiently. "These Americans are all alike—can't rest—must fret themselves to fiddle-strings. The idea of a man sacrificing his life to his work! It is positively wicked."

"I suspect he is a romantic sort of cove, who

fancies there is only one woman in the world," said her nephew, fixing his eyes on Grace. "If he is disappointed, he doesn't care to live. I have known one chap like that. It's very rum."

His sister said nothing. She rose and went to the window, where the curtains had not been dropped before the gas-lit street. A well-appointed brougham stood at the door. Grace thought she recognized the horses, and at the same moment the negro waiter entered and asked if the ladies were at home to Mrs. Courtly.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Frampton. Then, as the man disappeared, "I hear she is a delightful person—not only from Mordy, but others."

"I am glad you hear that," said Grace, smiling. "She *is* a delightful person, but many women are jealous of her, and you might have heard, as I did, that she is only delightful to men, which is not the least true."

The object of these remarks entered, swathed in velvet and silver-fox, and redolent of Parma violets. Her bright smile, graceful manner, and musical voice could not but dispose favorably one as sensitive to impressions as Mrs. Frampton.

"I do not feel that we are strangers—you have been so good to my children," she said.

Mrs. Courtly responded in a like strain, and then,

"I suppose I ought to apologize for calling on you just as you have arrived from a long journey, Mrs. Frampton, but I wanted to engage you all to dine with me to-morrow. I know you are to be here but a few days, and you must see something of our society—we think ourselves very nice, you know. I say 'we,' though I don't belong to Boston—only come in occasionally from my solitude, for a little social relaxation."

"Solitude! I like that!" laughed Ballinger. "I don't believe you are ever alone, Mrs. Courtly. I am sure you have a regular succession of representative men and women: literature, fashion, and the fine arts, they all go to you, and you take them in."

"That is a doubtful compliment," and the American lady gave a rippling laugh, "but I am afraid it is the truth. I do take them in—that is, the representatives of literature and the fine arts. They think I know something—I am just clever enough never to *do* anything, and so they do not discover what a fraud I am. As to fashion—oh, I can be frivolous enough, as you have seen. There is no sham about *that*."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mrs. Frampton, nodding her head, "for I am frivolous, too—frivolous and worldly, as this very superior young woman, my niece, is always pointing out to me."

"What a detestable creature you make me out! Happily, Mrs. Courtly knows me a little. When did you come to Boston, Mrs. Courtly, and where are you staying?"

"I am at the Vendôme, where I always go. I came on Saturday, and have been hunting up some of my friends to meet you to-morrow. On Wednesday, if agreeable to you, we will dine at the Country Club, where they have a little informal dance, ending at eleven o'clock, once a week. I think it will amuse you. If it snows, which it threatens to do to-night, we will go in sleighs."

Mrs. Frampton looked petrified.

"What! in evening dress?"

"Why, yes! We wrap up well, with fur hoods and double veils, and wear frocks that won't tumble; and the drive back, under a full moon, as we have now, will be delightful."

"Well," said Mrs. Frampton, dubiously, "I never did anything so skittish when I was young —and now that I am an old woman—what if I am upset?"

"Oh, you won't be upset—and if you were, it wouldn't hurt you. You have no distance to fall, and in the soft white snow—"

"Good heavens! The very idea of it sends cold water down my back. No, thank you. *They*

shall go, but you must excuse *me*. A nocturnal sleighing-party—returning from a ball—running races, I dare say—no, thank you—not for me!"

Mrs. Courtly's prediction was verified. The snow came down heavily before morning. The streets were blocked; the horse-cars moved stealthily along. Then it froze, and every one who ventured from his door trod very carefully, trying to obtain some hold on the white surface, slippery as glass and glistening in the noonday sun.

CHAPTER XVII

That morning, at breakfast in the public room, Mrs. Frampton was outraged at having a glass of ice-water and an orange given to her before the tea was served.

"What does the man give me an orange for, such a morning as this? As to this ice-water, I would not touch a drop of it, in any weather. I hope you have not, either of you, taken to that dangerous habit?"

Then, as the negro in attendance leaned reflectively on the back of Grace's chair, his round eyes fixed upon the animated face of the speaker, "May I ask," she continued, "if that gentleman of color always listens to your conversation? Perhaps he would join in if you asked him."

"It's a way they have here," murmured her nephew. "They don't mean to be cheeky, but servants here are the only class who *never*, by any accident, address you as 'sir.' As to these waiter-fellows, their manners, I admit, are peculiar. One darky pulled my hat off my head the

other day. He thought he was doing the civil thing."

She threw up her hands. "And, pray, did you do the civil thing in return?" The *menu* for the morning meal being handed to her, she exclaimed, "Good heavens! What is this? 'Clam chowder,' 'Squab pie.' What on earth is 'Squab pie'? 'Cold-slaw and shredded beef!'—it sounds like cannibalism! 'Flapjacks and maple syrup!'—a combination of fish and trees, I suppose! 'Waffles!' 'Buckwheat cakes!' 'Grits!' 'Dip toast!'—is that another word for 'pap'?"—and so on, with a running commentary, down the bill-of-fare.

Some of these unknown dishes, however, she tried, and candidly owned were excellent, and when the breakfast was despatched, and they had returned to their own "parlor," Mrs. Frampton was visibly better disposed towards the outer world. She moved one of the ponderous chairs to the window, and produced a long roll of embroidery.

"That is what I have not seen a woman do since I arrived in the States," said Mordaunt. "I dare say they work a great deal in strict private, but never in public. They don't consider it 'the thing,' I believe. They are very angry when I say so, but it is the truth."

"Well, there is no great virtue that I can see in doing this sort of rubbish," said his aunt, in her most amiable manner. "If I could do anything more useful, I should. But I can talk much better when I am pulling something about; and Grace and I are going to have a long gossip, while you go and smoke your cigar, and bring us back the news out of one of those dreadful, wicked papers."

"You're a regular Eve, Aunt Su," laughed her nephew, as he sauntered to the door. "The woman tempted me, and I did eat."

"Ah! Adam was a poor creature," returned Mrs. Frampton, as she put on her spectacles; then, when he had left the room, "I am not at all satisfied about Mordy," she continued, as she stabbed the canvas with her needle, and a stream of sanguinary *filoselle* followed it.

"Why, aunty?"

"Don't you see how much more silent he is, with only an occasional burst of his old fun? I am afraid he cares — *really* cares — for this girl."

"And if he does, what then? There is really nothing to object to in her. Putting her beauty aside, she is clever — in her way — wonderfully adaptable, and has a great deal of character. I don't say that she is exactly the sister-in-law I

should have selected, but then, almost certainly, the girl I should prefer Mordy would not look at. If Miss Planter makes up her mind to marry him, which I am not at all sure that she will—"

"The idea! Not accept Mordy, who might marry almost any one in England?"

"Nonsense, aunty. You know very well that, judged by your own standard—the worldly standard—a poor baronet, without any transcendent abilities to advance his career, is not a match for ambitious mammas or daughters to jump at. If dear Mordy really and truly falls in love at last with this American girl, and if she returns his love—she won't marry him unless she does—I see no reason why they should not be very happy."

"I wish it had been the Hurlstone girl," said Mrs. Frampton, without taking her eyes from her work. "Besides the money being certain in her case, there are the relations. The Planters, I am told, are people of yesterday."

"Yesterday, or the day before—does it make much difference?"

"The father, I am told, is impossible. The mother—"

"You heard all this from the Hurlstones; it is a tainted source. People are even more jealous

of eaeh other over here, it seems to me, than in London. And in this case, you see, there are peculiar reasons for jealousy. If you meet the Planters in the course of our travels"—she cautiously avoided any hint of the Californian rendezvous—"you must not be prejudieed. You must judge the girl upon her own merits. Promise me you will do this, aunty."

"Oh! No one ean say I am prejudieed. That is the last charge that can be brought against me." Graee bit her lip, and bent her head over a dropped stitch in her knitting. There was a little pause. Mrs. Frampton heaved a sigh, then stretching out her hand to her work-basket, drew from the depths of it a soeiety paper, not yet a fortnight old. "Look here, Graeey," she eontinued, as she opened and flattened out the paper with her hand; "there is a subject upon whieh I have long since given up speaking to you. I shouldn't do so now but for something Mordy said to me yesterday. I had hoped your eyes were gradually opened to Mr. Ivor Lawrence's true eharacter. I told Mordy to tell you the eommon topie of eonversation—the new light that has been thrown upon the ease. And now, as it seems you still believe in the man, I think you should see this paragraph," and she handed the paper to her niece. It ran thus:

"With regard to the disputed will of the late Mr. Tracy, which promises to be a *cause célèbre*, we understand that the attorney who drew up several wills for the deceased, between the years 1875 and 1887, has been traced to Victoria, where he emigrated on account of his health. He is subpœnaed to appear, and will be an important witness, as it is said he brings with him duplicates of these wills, which appear to have been destroyed. The evidence of this witness, as testifying to the affection which subsisted formerly between Mr. Giles Tracy and his uncle, will, it is said, be of paramount importance on the trial."

Mrs. Frampton's eye was fixed upon her niece as Grace read this, but she did not winee. She folded the paper carefully, and returned it to her aunt.

"Thank you; it makes no difference—I am sure you did not expect that it would?—in my opinion. It would be the same if Mr. Lawrence lost his ease. I *know* he is incapable of having used his influence with his uncle to induce him to alter his will."

"Humph! There are grave doubts whether it is not *forged*." Grace gave a little contemptuous smile. "I am told he has been given the cold shoulder at his club—one man cut him dead—and he goes nowhere."

"No; if he did, he would have come to us."

Mrs. Frampton pulled her needle so irritably through the canvas that the silk nearly snapped.

"Thank goodness he has not. If he had behaved like a gentleman, and eome forward immediately his uncle died, it might be difficult to shake him off now. As it is, he cut the Gordian knot himself."

"We will not go over the old ground again, aunt. The trial is publie property; I can't help hearing it discussed. But that question of his 'coming forward,' please, must never be spoken of. Just think how ineonsistent you are, dear. You suggest that he forged; and then say he would have behaved like a gentleman if, having forged, he had 'come forward.' The fact is, Ivor Lawrence is a very proud, sensitive man. I believe the tenor of his unele's will was a surprise to him, and when he was told it was to be disputed, and the eharge that was to be made against him, he resolved to subjeet none of his friends to the ordeal of reeeiving a suspeeted man until the trial was over. And now, dear aunt, please let the subject be elosed, as far as I am personally eoneerned. You are the only person who knows something of what I have suffered. But I have been lighter-hearted and braver sinee I left England. And why? Simply beeause time, instead of shaking my belief in the man whom all the world suspeets, has made it stronger. At first his silence erushed me. If I thought my friend

unworthy, I should still be crushed, far more than at first. But you see I am crushed no longer. Be content with that."

She had risen, and was standing before her aunt, who looked up, over her spectacles, literally dumfounded, until she felt two strong young arms flung round her neck and a shower of kisses upon her cheek. That was an argument she never could resist. She patted the girl's back with one fat, dimpled hand, while she wiped away a furtive tear with the other.

"God bless you, child! You are too good and noble—yes, too noble—for this wretched, miserable world of ours."

And so peace was restored between the two women, who, being very unlike, were yet warmly attached to each other.

Later, they went forth with Mordaunt, and walked across the park, on planks laid upon the pathway, up to Beacon Street, and were reminded of Bath, as one looks down from its century-old crescent; and then they crunched the frozen snow under their spiked shoes, back to the Museum of Fine Arts, where they found a collection of Blake's strange and poetic conceptions, and some memorable sketches by W. M. Hunt, an artist of rare genius, lately deceased, and but little known in England. Copley's portraits—

Lord Lyndhurst's father—of which there are so few examples in England, also interested them; and, of course, there were the usual inevitable French pictures, which are the staple commodity of all collections in the States. They passed a pleasant hour here, after which Mrs. Frampton was deposited at the Brunswick, as she declared nothing would induce her to enter the electric car, which was to convey her nephew and niece into the heart of the city.

"I have looked inside one," she said; "that is enough! I saw a double row of people standing up in the middle, clinging on by straps, and jammed against the knees of those who were seated! Never saw anything so shocking in my life. No, thank you. I will go in a carriage, or on my ten toes, or I will remain at home. None of those dreadful tramways for *me!*"

So they left her, and went their ways. And in their course they ran up against Mordaunt's wiry friend, Reid. He said he had come to Boston for a few days' visit to his mother, "who will be very happy to call on you, Miss Ballinger, if you will allow her." And when Grace had expressed her willingness to be called upon, he continued, "She is a real good woman, my mother; but you must be prepared for some tall talk. It don't amount to much,

but it takes a little time to get accustomed to it."

That evening the party assembled by Mrs. Courtly to meet her English friends was peculiarly agreeable. Besides Mr. Laffan and other distinguished men, there were three ladies: one, a poetess whose stirring verse had moved a whole nation's heart, and two sisters whose well-earned reputation for brilliancy had won for them the name of "The Duplex Burners."

Mrs. Frampton was at her best. She was always appreciative of talent, more especially of conversational talent, and would toss into the caldron, now and again, a pungent remark which stimulated alike the powers of the artists and the appetites of those who sat at meat.

The talk turning upon American modes of spelling, she said, in her trenchant way,

"I should have been whipped when I was a child, if I had spelled theatre *t-e-r* instead of *tre*. Why, it is neither Latin nor any other tongue!"

"We let 'the dead past bury its dead,'" was the reply. "We follow the living tongues, the tongues in your head and mine, and those distinctly say 'thea-*ter*.' We don't approve of whipping little girls for spelling as they pronounce, even if the result be to produce such brilliant women as yourself," with a bow.

Mrs. Frampton was redueed to silenee for a moment by this un-English eompliment, and so her ear caught another that was being proffered to Grace. Her nieee was deploring the loss of the letter *u* in so many words as now printed in Ameriea.

"Do you really like the *u* dropped in such a word as 'parlor'?" she asked of her neighbor.

"I prefer a parlor with *you* in it," he replied.

Grace laughed.

"You are trying to silenee me, I see. But do tell me why you *will* change our e's into s's, in sueh words as 'offenee' and 'defence'?"

"I suppose we think that in 'offence' and 'defence' you English are always *at sea!*" returned her ineorrigible neighbor.

And so the ehaff went on.

One man present sustained theories whieh, as coming from an Ameriean, were curious. He declared there was over-education in his country, and used all the arguments in support of this view whieh would have been employed by an old English Tory.

Mordaunt Ballinger stared when he heard a citizen of the United States deelare that musele and sinew were not yet driven out of the field by maehinery, that seientific absorption was an evil, and that the world's work cannot be done by the

brain alone. It was a little too much, even for the young conservative member, when this clever supporter of paradoxes maintained that people would be happier if they knew less, and that genius was more sure to rise from a poor educational plane than from a highly cultivated one.

"Certainly," assented another, "our most successful men in the country have *not* been the best educated."

"Theirs was a rich soil," continued the first speaker, "that needed no top-dressing. It was just suited to the grain it had to grow. Its strength was concentrated on that. Manured with learning, all manner of rank, useless stuff would have sprung up and flourished there."

"For shame!" said Mrs. Courtly's silvery voice. "I wonder you dare to talk such blasphemy almost within the shadow of Harvard! To think that I should live to hear a Bostonian throw such an aspersion on 'belles-lettres.'"

"Ah! dear lady, but 'belles-lettres,' like other feminine things, are so apt to distract our minds from the only serious object of life—which, of course, is money-getting!"

This elicited hisses and laughter, in which the speaker himself joined. *Il n'y a que la vérité qui blesse.* Boston could never take such an accusation to itself.

"One would fancy you were from Chicago!" said Mrs. Courtly.

Now Chicago is to the Bostonians as the full moon is to a dog—they are never tired of baying at it.

"Well, then, I *am* from Chicago. I was there two weeks ago on business. And what do you suppose I saw in a shop-window? I can tell you it was something worth going to Chicago to see. Why, a statue of the Venus de Medici in a Jaeger's combination suit!"

"Great Scot!" cried a man from the farther end of the table, "Jaeger must be like the poet, *nascitur* but *non fit*. Poor goddess! 'To what base uses we may return, Horatio!' But we are a practical people. Beauty and utility with us go hand in hand. Indeed, you see that in this case they don't stop *there*."

"No," said one of the ladies, gravely. "Life has never been the same to me since I saw Lord Byron's head, with a chestnut wig upon it, in a 'tonsorial saloon,' and a bust of the young Augustus at an optician's, with a pair of blue spectacles on his nose!"

Mrs. Frampton, meantime, was being questioned by her neighbor as to the route the travellers meant to take in going westward.

"I suppose you go through Chicago?" he said.

"Ask my nephew. I am as dough in his hands, and the dough is unleavened. It doesn't *rise* in the oven of your railway carriages. I dread the journey. By the bye, why *will* you call them 'cars'? My idea of a 'car' is the thing I remember as a child in my Roman history—Tullia trampling her father to death, you know—and so on."

"We don't trample our fathers, even when they are very much in the way; but we like short cuts for all that. Now 'car' is a short cut for a long carriage-drive."

"Oh! but I beg to say you don't *always* go in for shortness. You call a 'lift' an 'elevator,' and you always 'conclude' a thing, instead of 'ending' it. I must tell you frankly that we think those long words horrid."

"I am sorry for it," he replied, amused, "but we, on our side, think fashionable English slang, and a good deal of fashionable English pronunciation horrid. There is a lady here, lately returned from London, who speaks so beautifully that we can't understand more than half she says!"

Mrs. Frampton laughed. She was quite pleased with her neighbor. If he carried the war into the enemy's country, she felt justified in saying a tart thing.

"You mean that she no longer pronounces 'clerk' as if it rhymed with 'shirk' and 'work.'

You get that, and the tendency to nasal intonation from your Puritan fathers. We retain a Cavalier broadness and boldness of utterance."

"Ah! I see the broadness and boldness," returned the American, with a humorous twitch of the lips. "Still, all evidence shows that Englishmen of Chaucer's day pronounced 'clerk' as it is written."

"Chaucer? Good heavens! you don't expect us to go on talking as they did in Edward III.'s reign?"

"Why are you to start from Charles II. rather than Edward III.? '*Clark*' is an affectation that crept into the language in the seventeenth century, when it became the fashion to talk of *Jarsey* and *Barkley*. The latter I believe you still retain in fashionable parlance."

"Of course! The man or woman would be lost who spoke of *Berkley* Square."

"But worse than all is your fashionable pronunciation of Pall Mall. Why! you lose all the pleasant old association and courtly flavor of the 'Palace Mall' by calling it 'Pell Mell.' You might as well call it 'Helter-Skelter'!"

"Don't talk to me of association, or accuracy, or grammar, or anything else. Custom overrides all with us."

"The trouble is, that you will not allow it to do so with us," he returned, smiling.

"Really, I think we might be allowed to know how to speak our own language!"

"Not if you go on changing it all the time, according to the vagaries of fashion. When *we* have gotten hold of a word, we stick to it. Look at that poor word 'genteel,' which was such a useful servant to you all through the last century, and now you have kicked it into the gutter!"

"It deserved kicking into the gutter. It had become so frayed and tarnished that it wasn't fit to wear. We have incorporated a number of new words into the language, so no one can complain because we discard one or two."

"If the new ones supplied the vacuum, but they do not. You have no word to replace 'genteel.' Your argument reminds me of a man who, having lost his boots, put on two hats and an overcoat!"

Thus they sparred amicably through that pleasant dinner, the least animated participator in which, beyond a doubt, was Mordaunt Ballinger. And yet he sat beside Mrs. Courtly, whom he sincerely liked, and who, though she tried to make the conversation general, found an opportunity to say to him,

"I have heard of our friends' arrival at Pittsburgh."

"Do they speak of going to California?" he asked, quickly.

"Mrs. Planter's cough was worse as soon as she got home," replied Mrs. Courtly, with a smile. "That promises well."

CHAPTER XVIII

Mrs. Reid called the next day with her son. She was a solid-looking lady of rather severe aspect, with spectacles, as unlike as possible to her thin, quick-witted son. Mordaunt was out, and Mrs. Frampton, knowing that the American was the friend who had given him a good deal of advice as to investments, tackled him at once, leaving his mother to be entertained by Grace. Mrs. Frampton riddled him through with her questions; but he was equal to the occasion, and came so triumphantly out of the ordeal that she accepted with alacrity Mrs. Reid's verbal invitation to dine with her the following day.

"You will not expect a large party"—Mrs. Reid trod heavily on each word as she spoke—"my friend Lady Clydesdale, and one or two others, will be with me. But as I understand your nephew purposes leaving Boston in quite a few days, I was anxious to secure the pleasure of receiving you, if possible."

At Lady Clydesdale's name Grace had frowned

and shaken her head at her aunt, but it was no use. Miss Ballinger even went so far as to say,

"I am afraid that *I*—"

But Mrs. Frampton nipped her in the bud.

"Nonsense! my dear. We have no engagement, and I can't possibly leave you at home. My nephew would be extremely sorry to miss your hospitable invitation, Mrs. Reid. We shall be delighted to dine with you."

And when they were gone, she said,

"I like that man. He is very shrewd. He may be valuable to Mordy. I wouldn't miss dining with them for the world. As to your wanting to refuse because Lady Clydesdale is to be there, it is too foolish! The woman can't eat you."

"I should disagree with her if she did," laughed Grace. "Of course, if you and Mordy both want to go, I am ready to sacrifice myself, as I did, indeed, just now. You left me to Mrs. Reid's mercy, and she has very little. Her son prepared me for her 'tall talk'; but its height did not impress me so much as its weight. Between her and Lady Clydesdale, you will carry home nothing of me but a few mangled remains."

That same day two of their agreeable acquaintances of the previous evening escorted them to the State House, with its gilded dome and fine eighteenth-century decorations. They ascended

a lofty tower, and gained a comprehensive view of the city, the winding river, and Charlestown, and beyond it the south coast and island-sprinkled sea. It was a clear, brilliant day, though intensely cold. The dark boats on the glittering river, the numerous vanes and pinnacles that rose above the snow-bound city and caught the sunlight, the forest of masts in the harbor and silhouettes of wide-armed elms upon the Common, the frozen lake on which hundreds were skating and sliding merrily, and over all a span of wind-swept sky, almost Florentine in its hard, blue depth, startled the English travellers with unexpected beauty.

"This is really charming!" cried Mrs. Frampton. And after such an admission there was nothing more to be said.

Then they visited several book-stores and the noble public library. At last, when the sky was growing the color of a tea-rose, against which church tower and steeple uprose in solid purple, they recrossed the park, and Grace and Mordaunt hastened to dress for the Country Club dinner.

At six o'clock a double sleigh drove to the door, with a great jingling of bells, and servants fur capped and coated; and inside the open shell-shaped carriage two figures—one, a bundle of Shetland veils and sable, out of which Mrs. Courtly's silvery voice arose, the other, an atten-

uated stroke of black, like a note of admiration, as he leaped out and stood upright in the snow. This proved to be John Reid.

The brother and sister were equally pleased to find their brisk American friend of the party, and Mrs. Courtly explained that he had called on her late in the afternoon, when she had been so fortunate as to find he could fill the seat left suddenly vacant. She added in a whisper to Grace, while the two men were talking,

"His mother always tries to prevent his calling on me, if he is in Boston when I happen to be here. She will be extremely angry at our carrying him off to-night."

The moon had not yet risen, and the drive to the Country Club in the dark would have seemed long but for the ball of talk tossed to and fro. Mrs. Courtly was in her brightest and youngest mood, ready to enjoy, and therefore to make others enjoy, everything. They drove at length through some gates into a small park, and, at the tail of several other sleighs, alighted at a long house, surrounded by a wide balcony or "piazza," into which all the rooms on the ground floor opened. None were very large, and in nearly all small round tables were laid for dinner, so as to accommodate parties of four and six separately. Some were already occupied; some were

awaiting the descent of the ladies from their tiring-chamber.

Nearly every one had arrived, and the whole place was alive with light and bustle, greetings in merry, high-pitched voices; waiters, heavily laden, charging to and fro through the crowd; men with frozen moustaches thawing before the bright wood-fires; nymphs in procession down the stairs, emerging miraculously fresh from their hoods and mantles.

The dinner was excellent, and the spirit in which it was evident that every one sat down to it was that proper to all entertainment, but which so often with the English is conspicuous by its absence. They came, young and old, with the resolute intention of amusing themselves. If they had not "felt like" amusing themselves, they would have stayed away. Look round the room, and you could see nowhere that air of resignation—that air which says, "Though I should drop with fatigue and *ennui*, I will go through with it, never fear!" —which is so piteous on the faces, nay, on the very backs—of so many British chaperons. It is true there were but few of these. Two and three girls could come with one matron, leaving their respective mothers at home. If the mothers came, it was because they liked it; in some instances, because they meant to dance themselves. This

gayety of temperament and power of enjoyment was, of course, yet more remarkable when, after dinner—and a little interval for digestion, coffee, and cigars—men and women reassembled in a pretty ball-room upstairs. The hilarity then seemed infectious. Mordaunt had not appeared so animated since he had parted from Clare Planter. He danced with all the prettiest girls, was pronounced to be "too nice for anything," and encountered, in consequence, some scowls from jealous swains. At first it was only the young who "took the floor." But soon elderly gentlemen and mature dowagers were to be seen advancing, and receding, and gyrating, in the complicated movements of the waltz and polka, as naturalized in America. Mrs. Courtly, after presenting half a dozen men to Grace, was carried off by a youth, renowned for his dancing, and who always declared that no one waltzed like her. This was followed by "Dancing in the Barn," which Mordaunt had been taught at Brackly, and which he and Mrs. Courtly now performed greatly to their own satisfaction and that of the few spectators who were not themselves prancing round the room. Among those few were Grace and John Reid.

"Wouldn't my mother be down on Mrs. Courtly, if she could see her?" he said, laughing.

"What for? For making herself and others happy?"

"Why, yes, in *a way*," he replied, still chuckling. "You see, she is kinder severe, as we Yankees say, on Mrs. Courtly, who, *she* declares, tries to captivate every man she comes near. I tell her it wants no trying—we all take to Mrs. Courtly as ducks do to water. That makes my mother mad."

"I hope Boston is not very censorious?"

"Well, you see, I don't live in Boston," he replied, with becoming caution. "There are quite a number of sets here, and, as in other big cities, I suppose, they sit on each other—rather. My mother belongs to the earnest set. 'There are no flies on *her*.' (Have you heard the Salvation Army hymn? Well, I won't repeat it. It would shock you.) She is a real good woman, and spends all her time rummaging about at committees, and schools, and hospitals. The trouble is, she expects every one to have the same tastes, and can't tolerate what she calls 'frivolity.'"

"Then she will not tolerate *me*. I do nothing useful. Do you come often to Boston?"

"Once or twice a year, for a few days. In the summer my mother meets me at Newport, or we cross the ocean together. I allow I like that better than coming here, where my mother's friends are—well, not quite my style."

Then a man came up and claimed Grace's hand for "the german," and she had no further opportunity of hearing Mr. Reid's views. The dance was over at eleven o'clock; and now began once more a rapid eclipse of all the meteors, in their shining array, under soft but solid clouds of fur; and outside there was a jingling of bells, a champing of bits, and stamping of hoofs on the frozen snow, and the white moonlight streamed down over all, glistening like silver on the icicles that depended from the balcony, and articulating every object in blue-black shadow on the snow.

The drive back was like a fairy dream, with this advantage, it was exhilarating; while dreams often enervate, leaving their recipient, on waking, less well able to cope with hard, prosaic fact. They flew along in procession, with their clanging bells, over the burnished snow, every leafless twig told out in tracery of shadow on the roadway, every "sentinel pine," equipped in white fur, standing erect and motionless against the still, blue night. The moon was at its full, and smote the foreheads of the little painted wooden houses with its blinding light, and flooded the distant country, lifting blue hills, on the horizon, into that prominence which vagueness lends to outlines, from which the eye in sunlight is distracted by a thousand small intervening details.

"It was perfect enchantment!" said Grace to her aunt the next morning at breakfast.

"Yes, it was awfully jolly," said her brother. "And then Reid is such a good sort. We were lucky to have him with us. Some of these young chaps, I find, are very jealous of one. Such rot, you know. I overheard one of them say to a girl whom I had asked to dance, 'Of course *we* have none of us any chance *now*. You'll want to dance with the Englishman all the time!' I should like to have kicked him."

"Never mind about *them*; they don't interest me," said Mrs. Frampton. "Tell me what Mr. Reid said. Did you ask him anything about 'Readings' or 'Central Pacifics'?"

"Bless you! no, Aunt Su. Fancy talking of investments *en partie carrée* with Mrs. Courtly. She would have stopped the sleigh, and have begged us to get out."

Mrs. Reid's dinner that evening, in her magnificent house in Commonwealth Avenue, was as typical, in its way, as Mrs. Courtly's had been. There were six guests, besides Lady Clydesdale, invited to meet our English friends, and most of them appeared to be persons devoted, body and soul, to some one scientific, religious, or philanthropic cause. Genuine enthusiasm about anything is too rare for me to indulge in a little cheap

satire about it. Four of these guests struck both Mrs. Frampton and Grace as kindly, honest-minded men and women, not stuck-up with the vanity of well-doing, but with intelligence perhaps a little unduly inflamed over the propagation or extermination of something or other. The fifth was Miss Lobb, who was as drastic, as universal, and as unrelenting in her questions as she had been on board the *Teutonic*. The sixth was a merry little spinster of forty, with a cropped head and eyebrows like circumflex accents, who seemed strangely out of place in that serious assembly, until it transpired that she wrote for the daily papers —was what is called an "editor," which only means the caterer of certain branches of information. Being a *protégée* of Mrs. Reid's, she was invited to her table whenever there was "copy" to be picked up. Her name was Pie, which gave rise to a number of facile jokes among her friends —and she had many. For she was always good-humored, never wounded any one by her writing, and was often extremely serviceable to Mrs. Reid and others in airing the views and projects they desired to make public. Mordaunt, who took Mrs. Reid in to dinner, had Miss Pie on his other side. Mrs. Reid naturally sat at the head of her table; but, the party consisting of twelve, it was impossible, in the alternation of guests, that her son should

sit opposite her. He took Lady Clydesdale in to dinner, and placed her on his left, facing Mrs. Reid. Grace, on his right, found, to her extreme annoyance, that she was not only next but one to Lady Clydesdale, but, from her position close to the angle, could not avoid conversation with her countrywoman if it was thrust upon her.

Next to Grace was an ancient bachelor, of great wealth and boundless liberality, who had founded and endowed several charitable institutions, and whose purse-strings were so readily untied that he was attacked by every promoter of beneficence in turn. He took Mrs. Frampton in to dinner, upon whose left sat an eminent doctor. Then came Mrs. Reid, dominating the table; and on the other side, next to Miss Pie, a Unitarian minister, naturally voluble, but utterly quelled by Miss Lobb, who was next him. The individual who sat between this terrible lady—before whom most men fled—and Lady Clydesdale was a business man, to whom she devoted most of her attention during dinner.

It had not advanced far when the hostess, placing her heavy artillery into position, directed a slow shot at Mrs. Frampton.

"I regret that, during your too brief stay here, you should not have come into contact with the higher educational and progressive life of Boston,

Mrs. Frampton. I have been deploring to Sir Mordaunt Ballinger that he should have seen only the frivolous side of our society. There is another—that of culture, that of philosophical investigation, that of enthusiasm for humanity. These are not to be found at Country Club balls."

"No. They would be rather out of place there. But you have given us enough of all those good things here to-night to readjust the balance, I fancy."

And Mrs. Frampton said this with a pleasant smile, which — probably to all but Miss Pie— robbed the rejoinder of any latent satire.

The benevolent old bachelor on her left here claimed her attention with a remark, which left Mrs. Reid no choice but to withdraw her field-pieces. She turned to her right.

Mordaunt had been talking for the last few minutes to the bright little spinster. He found a hand laid heavily upon his arm, and a voice hurtled past him,

"My dear Pie, I cannot allow you to monopolize Sir Mordaunt *entirely*. She is a savory Pie, but must be cut sometimes. (You forgive my little joke, dear?) I was going to tell you, Sir Mordaunt, of my disappointment in not having secured the most delightful woman to meet you this evening—the person of all others who is a

representative of what is noblest, most cultivated, most advanced, among American women."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mordaunt, maliciously. "Of course I know whom you mean. That description can only refer to *one* woman."

"Do you mean that you have *met* her?"—this with heavy-eyed surprise.

"Of course I have. Mrs. Courtly and I are great friends."

She threw up her hands, and at the same moment caught Lady Clydesdale's eye by inclining her head a little to one side.

"That woman!" she almost groaned. Then she leaned forward, and said, down the table, with solemnity,

"My dear Lady Clydesdale, will you tell your countryman here that we have nobler types of womanhood than Mrs. Courtly; that in our earnest seeking after the light we entirely repudiate that class of persons—worldly pleasure-seekers, whose influence over the youth of both sexes we hold to be very pernicious."

John Reid and Mordaunt exchanged glances, and in John's was the faintest indication of a twinkle.

"I should not esteem this country as I do if it were made up of Mrs. Courtlys!" said Lady Clydesdale, severely.

"Widows, who only think of ensnaring men!" cried Miss Lobb.

"Come, my dear," said the merry little Pie, "you and I do just the same, all the time, only we don't succeed as well."

There was some natural laughter at this, but Mrs. Reid could not encourage levity on so grave a subject.

"At her time of life," she said, "still to court the society of the young and giddy—to dance and flirt as she does! Mrs. Frampton, I trust you understand that is not the stamp of woman *we* approve of."

"Really? Well, it is very difficult to please every one. She seems to please a great many."

"*Too* many! That is the trouble,"—this with an ominous shake of the head. "Men are so easily deluded!"

"She does not only charm men," said Grace, who felt it was cowardly to remain longer silent; "she can delight women also. She is the most many-sided person I have ever met—with a great deal more depth than people give her credit for."

"My! what bravery!" chuckled Miss Pie, under her breath.

"No one doubts her *depth*," rejoined Lady Clydesdale, sarcastically; "but every one knows you have peculiar opinions, Miss Ballinger, about

conduct, both in men and women. If you like people, you defend them, no matter what they do."

"How ought I to behave when I hear *you* abused, Lady Clydesdale?" she asked, white with anger, for she had a premonition of what was coming.

"Time enough for that when I have done something to forfeit public esteem," she replied, with perfect coolness. "At present I trust my conduct needs no defence. Have you heard, by the bye, anything more of that terrible story about Mr. Ivor Lawrence. You knew him, I think, rather well?"

"Yes, I did," Grace replied, flaming up, and looking straight into her antagonist's eyes. "I knew him to be an honorable man, utterly incapable of the meanness of which he is accused!"

"You think so? I hope you may not be mistaken; but I fear there is no doubt of his guilt. It is only another instance of human frailty."

"The worst human frailty is repeating and believing such falsehoods!" returned the girl, in a voice tremulous with indignation.

"We *all* knew him rather well," Mordaunt called out from the other end of the table, coming, like a gallant gentleman as he was, to his sister's rescue. "We are sure he will be proved

innocent of the charge, but in the meantime we avoid the subject, don't you know."

"I can quite understand *that*," replied Lady Clydesdale, with a very peculiar inflection. "It is so very difficult sometimes to speak the truth about—one's friends. He was no friend of mine —so I can do it."

"We shall find no difficulty in doing that about you, Lady Clydesdale. I know you are truth itself, and you will supply us with all the details."

Mrs. Reid, who saw that the relations between her English guests were strained, here swooped down upon the young man, while her son, at the other end of the table, diverted Lady Clydesdale's attention to the congenial subject of female suffrage.

After dinner, in the drawing-room, Miss Pie came and sat beside Grace.

"I admired you so much standing up for your friends at dinner—Mrs. Courtly and that Englishman. Lady Clydesdale is a very able woman—quite a pioneer for our sex. But she is a little apt to lay down the law."

"It would be a bad thing if the law was what she lays down. I think she is more likely to do harm than good to any cause she sustains."

"My! I am afraid you are not very advanced,

Miss Ballinger," said the little lady, with a twinkling eye. "Here we have to keep going all the time, or we get unhooked, and the train goes on without us. Lady Clydesdale is a powerful engine. Some of her opinions, from a member of the British aristocracy, have been an eye-opener to us. But we of the press, of course, are bound to catch on, and support her in her levelling views —whether we quite believe them or not," she added, laughing.

"In some ways you seem to be more 'respecters of persons' than we," said Grace. "If the 'level' you preach is the broad humanity level, irrespective of wealth, or brains, or race, how are you going to reconcile your attitude towards negroes, whom you will not associate with, nor even allow to sit down at a public table with you?"

"Well, there *are* reasons for *that*," returned Miss Pie, nodding her cropped head vigorously. "But, apart from other considerations, the prejudices of race are not to be argued about. They may be just as irrational as the repugnance some people have to snakes, some to cats, some to spiders. But you were asking what 'level' we preach. Why, the level of success and prosperity, to be sure! We say one man is as good as another, if he is only successful; and if we educate the poor, and fire them with ambition, why should not

every one be prosperous? Why should there be those terrible inequalities of fortune?"

"Unless you can establish an equality of brain, of physical strength and energy, how is it possible that all men shall be equal? It was never so from the beginning of time. Were Cain and Abel equal? Your country being comparatively new, there is a greater demand for laborers in every field—a greater space for labor. It is not so with us; it will not be so with you some day. And to my thinking Lady Clydesdale's socialistic doctrines are calculated to make people dissatisfied with 'that state of life unto which it hath pleased God to call' them."

The little lady rubbed her hands, and laughed.

"I am quite satisfied with mine—especially to-night. It has been real nice to have a talk with you, Miss Ballinger. We get into such a groove of thinking! You take one right off the line, back into the tracks of the Old World."

And then some man came up, and the conversation ended.

CHAPTER XIX

The morning after this dinner, Mordaunt, looking up from his newspaper, said with a laugh,

"Well! You've done it this time, Gracey—you profited by experience, and were civil to that jolly little woman who sat next me at dinner. I didn't know she was a press writer till we were well through, but we got on like a house a-fire, and here is your reward and mine."

Then he read aloud:

"'Mrs. Reid offered a dinner at her sumptuous residence in Commonwealth Avenue, last night, to the Countess of Clydesdale, Sir Mordaunt Ballinger, Bart., M.P., Miss Ballinger, and Mrs. Frampton. Some of our most prominent citizens were invited to meet the distinguished guests, and especial interest was felt in the presence of the son and daughter of an Englishman who was so firm a friend to America, and so honored here, as the late Sir Henry Ballinger. Of the countess, that advanced thinker, who recently addressed a large audience on woman's rights, it is needless

to speak. Mrs. Frampton, Sir Mordaunt's aunt, is an elderly lady, evidently of great bodily and mental activity. The present baronet, like his father, is a Conservative in politics, and has the stalwart bearing and aristocratic air that we associate with the heroes of modern English romance. He is eager to acquire knowledge as to the natural resources of our country, and the urbanity of his manner and his brilliant social qualities'—ho! ho!—'must make him welcome wherever he goes. As to his sister, the accounts which had reached us of her beauty and charm do scant justice to this fascinating English belle, who is not only lovely to a fault, but can be impassioned in her eloquence when roused, and combines acuteness of intellect with the frankness of a child.'"

"Well done!" cried Mrs. Frampton. "You owe Lady Clydesdale something for having brought out your 'impassioned eloquence,' Gracey."

Then, seeing that her niece looked annoyed, while a flush mounted to the roots of the girl's hair, she felt it was unwise to have alluded to that scene, and tried to change the subject. But Grace, with a resolute disregard to pain, said presently,

"It was very nice of you, Mordy, to speak up as you did last night, feeling as you do on the subject. I am ashamed to have been so roused,

aunty. I am ashamed to think such a woman could have it in her power to make me show what I felt. Passion should not be wasted on donkeys — even on malevolent donkeys. This one tries to knock you down, and ride over you. If she can find out where your heart is, she will plant her hoofs there. If not, she will kick at your brains. Nothing shall induce me ever to speak to her again."

Her aunt and her brother exchanged glances, but no word passed; and presently Mordaunt began discussing financial matters with Mrs. Frampton, expressing his intention of pushing on to Colorado as soon as possible. The relative merits of ranches, mines, and building property could only be investigated on the spot.

Grace had her own ideas as to what lay at the bottom of this increased alacrity to go west, but she held her peace.

Mrs. Courtly was to take them to the theatre that night, and to return to Brackly the following day. Mordaunt declared that the chief attraction of Boston for him would then be gone, and he proposed to start for Chicago the same morning.

Will either of the three ever forget that evening, when they witnessed Jefferson's performance in "The Heir at Law"? It will always live as an epoch in their dramatic experiences. His "Rip

Van Winkle" is not a greater triumph, though in a different line; for the exquisite naturalness of this fine artist transforms an artificial and farcical impossibility into an eccentric character of flesh and blood, in which he persuades us to believe so implicitly that we should never be surprised to meet Dr. Pangloss walking down Beacon Street or Piccadilly. What a lesson to actors is here! The rigid fidelity to nature—the nature of intonation, expression, and gesture—never allowing the laughter of the "groundlings" to seduce him into exaggeration of any kind—this has its reward in our frank acceptance of, nay, our sympathy with, a very unreal personage. Played by an inferior actor, I can imagine nothing more tedious than Dr. Pangloss would be, with his endless quotations, his facile venality, his outrageous wig. What seemed funny to our grandfathers does not amuse us very much. It needs the genius of a Jefferson to vivify the dry bones of an antiquated farce.

They all bade Mrs. Courtly good-by with real regret.

"We must meet in Bayreuth next year," she said. "Will you give me a rendezvous for the end of July?"

"No," said Mrs. Frampton, decidedly, before Grace could speak. "Before that, in my house in London. Make it your hotel, when you pass

through, for as long as you can. Write or cable that you are coming; that is all that is necessary."

Grace had not felt so depressed since she landed in America as she did during that journey to Chicago. It was in vain she said to herself, over and over again, that nothing which her aunt or Mordaunt, or, least of all, Lady Clydesdale, had said concerning Ivor Lawrence, had the smallest effect on her. In one sense, it had not—she never doubted him. But the apprehension of an overwhelming trouble to him—a cloud, from which it might prove impossible to clear himself—had visibly strengthened in her mind. It was useless to argue against it; she could not shake off this cold, sickening dread which swept in gusts over her. With her usual bravery she concealed her feelings; but, the call for social exertion being now over, there were long spaces of silence and solitude on the journey, when, with a book in her hand, she could brood over this trouble, unsuspected by her two companions.

The route chosen was by Philadelphia. They did not stop at New York, but travelled straight through at night, arriving at their destination early in the morning. Here they halted the remainder of the day, and visited "Independence Hall," where the Declaration was signed, and

where the room and its furniture remain much as they were on that famous day when the heat was so great and the flies so irritating that as the assembled gentlemen flicked their silk handkerchiefs and wiped their brows the voting is said to have been hurried through, and some members not even waited for. Yet the minority against the Declaration was a considerable one. As Mordaunt said to the amiable gentleman who acted as their guide,

"Who knows how a cold day and a full hall might have changed the destinies of this continent, eh?"

The amiable gentleman, being a stanch patriot, looked confounded. Then, after they had been shown several pastels of the chief voters and orators of that stirring time, and had examined the building, which is like many a Georgian mansion in the English counties, and was built of red bricks brought from England, they were driven through some portion of the largest and most beautiful city park in the world. It extends over three thousand acres of hill and dale, wood and winding river, untortured by man. Happily, to use the guide-book's language, "Art has as yet done little for it." May it never do more. It is a beautiful spot, and Philadelphia may be proud in the possession of so unique a playground.

But what of its streets? Mrs. Frampton was greatly disconcerted by being nearly jolted off her seat as she drove along.

"Did you ever see anything like it?" she cried. "I thought New York and Boston bad enough—but this! How can the people who live in those nice little red houses, picked out with white marble, and marble steps so beautifully clean—"

"Stoops. You must call them 'stoops,' aunt," said Mordaunt.

"Stoups? I never heard of a stoup of anything but Burgundy—in Scott's novels. But never mind. I say, how *can* people living in houses that are like Dutch toys, so spick and span, tolerate such roadways? Really, these Americans are an incomprehensible people!"

"No, not incomprehensible," said her nephew. "Ask any fellow here. He'll explain it fast enough. All public works are jobberies. If the streets were freshly paved to-morrow, in all these cities, it would be so badly done—so much money would be made *out* of them—that they would be as bad as ever next year."

"Abominable!" said Mrs. Frampton, with energy.

"Besides that," he continued, "this particular city is regarded by most Americans—especially New-Yorkers—as a 'Sleepy Hollow.' Miss Pie,

who is a Philadelphian, told me she had been puzzled to see herself spoken of in some paper as the only female citizen who *suffered from insomnia.* Then she remembered the vile aspersion, which of course she denied. She was awfully good fun, that little woman. She gave me the idea of a middle-aged Puck, eh? Puck was a sexless sort of a being, I fancy."

The Stratford Hotel, where they stayed one night, met with great favor at Mrs. Frampton's hands; and so did the Auditorium, at Chicago, in contradistinction to others, on the road, which shall be nameless. The manner of serving every meal in the public room of these latter hostelries, all the dishes being pitched simultaneously in a semicircle of saucers round the consumer, was exasperating.

"Pray, do you expect me to devour fish, pudding, entrées, meat, and all those unknown vegetables at one and the same time? Why on earth can't you bring them separately?" she demanded of the astonished negro waiter.

Then the inevitable pitcher of ice-water which came up each time she rang her bell was another offence. She marvelled greatly as she looked down the long crowded dining-room, and saw only this same ice-water or tea being drunk at dinner by stalwart men. Any delusions, how-

ever, which she might have had as to their "total abstinence" were soon dispelled. Whenever she passed through the public hall, she saw some of these men at the bar; they were not then drinking tea or ice-water.

The party stayed three days at Chicago, and were duly impressed with its vastness, the massiveness of the business portion of the city, the length and extraordinary diversity of architecture of its boulevards. Some of the least pretentious houses, and notably those by Richardson, were good, and gave a pleasant impression of happy home life, without ostentation. But many appeared to have been built regardless of any known principle, save that of endeavoring to out-do your neighbor. The classic and Gothic styles here take hands, and might almost be said to dance a *cancan* together, as they assuredly have never been seen to do before. These jokes in stone and marble of every hue are like a child's design for a palace, striking up spikes into the sky, and jumbling together turrets and pillars, porticoes and machicolated walls, in a fashion which Mordaunt declared entitled it to be called "the Porcine, or Bristle-on-end" style of architecture.

Of course he went to witness the assassination of the hogs, and, watch in hand, counted sixteen

despatched in one minute, while the ladies spent the morning at the Art Museum, and found, with wonder and delight, many of the gems of the Demidoff Collection, which they remembered in the Villa San Donato, at Florence. It seemed a curious illustration of the Chicago mind, munificent of everything but its time, and jealous for the city's reputation, that, while willing to expend large sums on such acquisitions as these, it had not leisure to arrange and exhibit them properly. Mrs. Frampton observed to a wealthy and acute citizen, to whom she brought a letter, that it was a pity such treasures were not seen to more advantage. His reply was characteristic:

"Well, you see, we business men are making money all the time. It is a race in which one is very soon left out of the running. If I go to Europe for three months I have to look pretty sharp to keep my place, I can tell you, when I return. Time enough to build galleries and all that by and by."

This reminded Grace of a saying of Mr. Laffan's, "You must make the man before you can make the statue."

Mordaunt dined out each night, and was interested in meeting several of the shrewd business men who had amassed huge fortunes. He was almost tempted to invest in grain, live-stock, or

lumber, but Mrs. Frampton, with a hand of iron, restrained him.

"Are you going to spend your life here?" she asked. "These men do, and know what they are about. From their cradle they have heard nothing but money talked of. They are born 'cute men of business. What do you think that pretty child of five, in the hotel, said to me yesterday, when I asked him what he meant to be when he grew up?—'I guess I'll keep a store!' I expected him to say, 'I mean to be the President,' or a general, or something. But no, he would 'keep a store!' There you are. How can you compete with such people? No. Invest in something that doesn't require your constant personal supervision, or else leave it alone."

On one of these evenings there was a dance, to which all were bidden, but only Mordaunt went. The next morning he described how he had met a charming family, who all spoke of their "factory," which, on inquiry, he learned was one of coffins! They referred in the most natural way to their industry—the father mentioning the "boom" there had been in his trade not long since, owing to the influenza; the son informing Mordaunt that he had charge of the brass-nail and plate department; the daughter, that she designed the embroidery for the palls. This

cheerful conversation took place in the intervals of the merry dance and at the convivial supper-table.

"They were awfully nice," added Mordaunt, "but it sent cold water down my back to hear them talk. It sounded like ghouls, fattening on graves." Then he told them of an old man he had met, who came from a neighboring city, where he had amassed a vast fortune, and lived in great loneliness, his wife and children electing to reside in Europe. Why he had been weak enough originally to give in to this arrangement was unexplained; but there was something at once humorous and pathetic in the monody of gratified vanity and personal loneliness with which he favored the Englishman.

"I give you my word, I didn't know whether to congratulate or to condole with him," said Mordaunt, "when he told me that his only daughter was married to a French count, and that he should never see her again now—never! The tears trickled down his thin cheeks, as he said that she had forgotten all about her old home—her old father. But, in the midst of his trouble, he recovered himself. There was balm in Gilead yet. 'You know, sir, *the family dates back to Charlemagne!*' So it is for this that such devoted parents are content to toil and

moil all their lives! By the Lord Harry! Self-sacrifice takes very funny forms sometimes!"

And Aunt Su fully agreed with him.

Having heard from Mrs. Caldwell that she awaited their arrival, they started for Denver on the fourth morning, between which city and Colorado Springs her home was situated. Two days and nights' travelling rather tried Mrs. Frampton's patience and powers of endurance, but the air, which grew keener and more elastic during the last twelve hours, as they left the plain and its vapors and damp mists, and ascended the high table-land, surrounded by snowy mountains, invigorated all the party. Mordaunt declared his aunt was the youngest of the trio when they alighted at the station, where Mrs. Caldwell's carriage awaited them. The beauty and strangeness of the scene—as they drove up a winding road, between rugged peaks of sandstone, some nearly blood-red, others milk-white, others again like amethyst, projected against the clear blue sky, and simulating the pinnacles, turrets, and spires of a castellated city—recalled the wild creations of Gustave Doré. It seemed too fantastic to be real. The very pine-trees looked tormented, springing from clefts in the rock, some erect, some twisted by the winds, but all with arms flung out over wide-

mouthed chasms, where the eagles had their nests. The house stood high up on a shelf of rock, protected from the north and east winds, but open to the south. A slope of terraced garden lay below it, ending in a brook, which fell, with the noise of tumbling waters, down a cañon at the back of the house. The "Falcon's Nest," as it was called, built by the late Mr. Caldwell, was of wood, unpretentious, and in perfect taste, for its position, and the lives its inhabitants were meant to, and did actually, live. Labor and repose for some; comfort and hospitality for all who entered its broad portals, and found a pleasantly diffused but not oppressive warmth reigning through the suite of rooms panelled with pine, where plenty of books, sofas, and rocking-chairs invited the inmates to rest and be thankful.

Mrs. Caldwell and Doreen met their guests in the hall, to which the horns of buffalo and elk and some magnificent bear-skins lent a pleasant touch of savagery. Pierce Caldwell was at his office, and would not return till the evening. Alan Brown and another young man staying there were gone to skate, and after luncheon, Mordaunt, under Doreen's guidance, set off in a sleigh to join them. It was very cold, that still, dry cold of which one does not realize the inten-

sity until one consults the thermometer; but here, with a blazing wood fire to warm one spiritually, and hot-water pipes to perform the work practically, Mrs. Frampton declared the temperature was delightful; and her critical nature was pleased with her hostess's manner.

"That is a nice woman," she said to her niece, when they were alone, later in the day. "She doesn't 'protest too much.' She is sensible, well-bred, and knows just how much to say, and what to leave unsaid. All Americans have not that tact."

"Nor all English people either. I like that little Doreen so much — she is a sweet little thing; and the son—I am sure you will fall in love with the son, aunt."

Mrs. Frampton's unspoken reply was, "I almost wish *you* would. Not seriously, of course, but just to distract your thoughts."

Pierce Caldwell returned at dusk, and found the ladies at tea. His frank charm of manner, even more than his good looks, won Mrs. Frampton at once; and knowing how energetic he was in the work he was carrying on, she began questioning him about it. Her capacity for taking a vivid interest in the details of other people's affairs always distinguished her. It is not a common gift, that power of throwing one's self heart-

ily into matters that do not personally concern one.

"Your mother tells me you have had a hard fight with your mine, Mr. Caldwell; but you have triumphed over all your difficulties?"

"Oh! mother exaggerates the difficulties. It only wanted a little patience. The mine when father died, you see, was a mere prospect. I had to develop it. It turned out much better than even father ever expected, but I had to go on with the exploration for two years before I thought it prudent to erect a mill."

"Well? And now," she continued, with eagerness, "it is proving a great success? Everything has prospered with you?"

"Yes," he said, quietly. "Everything, up to the present, has prospered, I am glad to say. I am now going to turn it into a company. We have to erect other works, and it is too great an undertaking for one man, alone. Of course I shall retain a very large interest in, and the chief management of, the company, but I can't work it all by myself."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Frampton, reflectively. "I suppose you want to get away occasionally, and amuse yourself in New York, like other young men of your age?"

"Well, no; I *do* go away, now and again, when

business takes me to New York or Washington, but I don't stay much longer than I can help. I always feel as if things couldn't get on without me at the mine, and I love this place. I believe I am never so happy anywhere as here."

The skaters, with Mordaunt and Doreen, now entered. Alan Brown did not look happy. Doreen had driven the Englishman in her sleigh to and from the skating-grounds; and Alan's proclivities for all that was English did not extend to a baronet, six feet high, who was notorious as a flirt, and who seemed inclined to try his hand, just to keep it in, upon the object of the young American's affections. In this he was quite mistaken; Mordaunt had the same manner with every woman under—and some over—fifty, which accounted for his being so popular. The unsophisticated Doreen thought him charming, and he was quite willing to be thought so. It gave him but little trouble to be nice to this bread-and-butter miss, whom he found really not so dull as he had anticipated. Alan only saw the effect, however—the young girl's increased animation and volubility, and he was proportionately depressed.

The other man, Bloxsome by name, was a Californian. He was not attractive, either in appearance or manner, to our friends, and, as he only stayed one day at the "Falcon's Nest," it would

be unnecessary, but for subsequent events, to name him here. How did he come to be a friend of the family? His manner and the tone of his mind contrasted so strongly with Pierce Caldwell's that it was difficult to account for their apparent intimacy. He was coarse and loud, with a grating voice and accent, and his "spread-eagleism" was especially offensive to Mordaunt. To the ladies this was simply amusing. They did not in the least object to his thinking everything in his own country, beginning with himself, nobler, greater, and better than the rest of the universe. It was a failing with which they were not wholly unacquainted in England. But foibles, which may be pardoned when allied with good manners, are more trying when accentuated with ill-breeding.

He sat on one side of Grace at dinner that first evening, and in the course of it—apparently accidentally—Miss Planter's name was mentioned. When Grace thought afterwards over what had passed, she felt sure that the accident was only apparent. Mr. Bloxsome had adroitly led the conversation up to the point when Grace's hand was forced, so to speak, and the "belle's" name dropped from her. He seized it.

"Clare Planter? Why, I know her quite well. I heard your brother was *vurry* intimate with her. Is that so?"

"My brother and I stayed at a country-house with her. That is the way of becoming intimate—if people like each other. And we both of us like Miss Planter."

"I reckon that's because she thinks such a heap of England and English people."

"Not entirely," replied Grace, coolly. "Of course we should not like her if she hated us."

"*We* find her ever so much spoiled since she crossed the ocean."

"Then she must have been very charming before."

"But Mrs. Planter is worse. She *is* a regular Anglomaniac. Won't call on any one in Pittsburgh now, I'm told. They are coming to Friseo in quite a few days. I guess you know that?"

"They spoke of the likelihood of going to California."

"Sir Mordaunt knows it is more than a 'likelihood,' I reckon. He will find Mr. Planter a stiff customer—not ready to come down with the oof, and not half as rich as he is supposed to be. Your brother is hunting around, I hear, for an Amurican heiress? Wull, you can just tell him this—no Amurican girl knows how rich she is till she can say, 'Our Father, which art in Heaven.'"

Grace looked at him with a flashing eye, and there was ineffable scorn in her voice as she said,

"My brother is not a fortune-hunter, nor did he feel impelled to ask Miss Planter to say her prayers."

Then she turned and addressed Pierce Caldwell on her other side.

She avoided Mr. Bloxsome as far as possible during the remainder of the evening.

CHAPTER XX

The next day, when another slight fall of snow in the night had been frozen as hard as the surface of a wedding-cake over all the roads in the district, Mordaunt was driven by Pierce Caldwell in his sleigh up the beautiful drive his father had made along the mountain-side to the mouth of the mine. Here he passed some hours in examining all the processes of silver-milling, and the many improvements, due to Pierce's energy, which had been effected in the works since the day they were established. He descended the mine by a new shaft opened a few days previously, which had been sunk several hundred feet, and which had laid bare fresh veins of ore, richer, apparently, than any which had yet been worked. Mordaunt's enthusiasm rose to fever pitch. When he had returned to the earth's surface, he gasped,

"By Jove! Caldwell—this is the biggest thing out. You're a lucky chap — no! I suppose I oughtn't to say that. How few young chaps

would have been able to do what you have done! It is splendid—it really is!"

"Oh! it's no merit of mine. I have done nothing except just stick to the business, and watch, and let nothing slip. It is desperately interesting, I can tell you. And then the boys—they're a rough lot, but such good fellows! I'm fond of them all, and they'd go to—well! anywhere for me, I believe. This is the reading-room I've built for them."

The "boys" were men, some well over fifty, begrimed with dirt, and many, it must be confessed, of forbidding aspect. The stories Mordaunt had been told of shots fired at random in saloons and drinking bars gained in probability as he looked at them. Indeed, Pierce confirmed them from his own experiences as a youth, when he remembered, in a saloon, having to throw himself flat on the ground "to prevent stopping the balls," and the floor was strewn subsequently with wounded men. He repeated an anecdote of lynch law in those not-far-distant days, as he heard it, in the words of the narrator, "which," he continued with a laugh, "I think are characteristically succinct. The fellow was telling me how their camp had suffered by the robbery of horses, and he added, 'But I tell you, sir, that we collared a man the other day, *owning* a horse that didn't

belong to him. The next thing that man found was that *his legs were not touching the ground!*"

Mordaunt laughed heartily at this graphic euphemism, and then said,

"I suppose they are getting fast civilized now? All the Bret-Harteism will be swept away before long—eh?"

"Why, yes. We have schools now everywhere, and churches and institutes. They spring up like mushrooms."

"But who builds them? All along the track of the railway I saw big towns growing up. It seems little short of miraculous in so short a time."

"Well," said the young man, with an amused expression on his handsome face, "you see, it is like this. There is a contractor who undertakes to build for each municipality. If they order fifty houses, he throws in a school; if they order a hundred, he throws in a church. It is as well to do the thing handsomely, for he is 'cute enough to know it is a remunerative advertisement."

The ladies now drove up in a *char-à-banc* with the other two men. Alan Brown, having had the field all to himself for some hours, looked reconciled to life, though he would have preferred life in Piccadilly with Doreen to life under the same conditions in the Rocky Mountains. But the

young girl had pacified him, I presume, as to the English baronet, and, indeed, Ballinger showed himself to be so entirely engrossed in the ninety-stamp dry-crushing silver mill, that there was no pretext for a renewal of the young American's jealousy. Mordaunt found an opportunity of whispering to his aunt,

"This is the investment for me. I'm sure I can't do better than get all the shares I can in the new company that is being formed."

But Mrs. Frampton demurred.

"Don't be in a hurry. This climate is really too exciting to judge of anything dispassionately. Wait till we get damper, my dear. I am ready to jump out of my skin." Then, to Pierce, who came up at that moment, "Mr. Caldwell, how do you manage to exist, with your nerves in the constant state of tension they must be in here? When your butler handed me potatoes last night, and touched my shoulder, I nearly screamed, he gave me such a shock. And I find I send out blue sparks every time I turn the brass handle of the door! It is frightful! I am become one vast electric battery!"

"You would no doubt be able to light the gas with your fingers. Some people have more electricity than others. I haven't so much, and get along here very well. And this dry climate has

its advantages. We are going to lunch on the mountain-side, if you are not afraid?"

"What! In the snow? To be sure, the sun is very hot, and there is no cold wind—"

"Oh, yes, and we will find a sheltered place under the rocks. My mother and sister always do this when they come up here to lunch with me, for the men's saloon and reading-room are not odoriferous. You won't find it cold, *al fresco*, such a still day as this."

Nor did they. Their luncheon spread upon the crisp snow, a cloudless sky above them, the sun pouring down on the little amphitheatre of rocks in which Pierce had ensconced the ladies, Mrs. Frampton declared it was an ideal midday dining-room—a combination of Davos-Platz and Cairo—which left nothing to be desired.

Bloxsome, in his coarse, loud way, was amusing; but the instinctive dislike of our English friends seemed to be shared by Alan Brown, between whom and the elder American there was a constant sparring. Grace confessed to herself that the youth's Anglomania must be trying to one of his countryman's boastful temper, but this did not excuse the bad taste of Bloxsome's rejoinders. When Alan described, with boyish enthusiasm, a driving tour he had taken through the north of England, the other said,

"Why do you squirm about English scenery so much? Say, can you find anything in all England to compare with this, I should like to know? Talk of their lakes—why, they're mere ponds; and their rivers—ditches beside ours."

"Size isn't everything," said Alan, scornfully. "The lovely roadside hedges—the beautiful roads themselves—then, the dear old-fashioned inns, the ruined abbeys, the historic castles—what have we got to compare with *them?* Travelling here is beastly. No wonder Americans travel very little in their own country for pleasure."

Bloxsome gave a coarse laugh. "No, they transact their business at home, and go abroad for amusement. English people amuse themselves at home, and come here to invest their money or pick up heiresses."

Pierce Caldwell blushed, and cut in with some wholly irrelevant remark, talking fast and laughing, in the impotent endeavor to obliterate the effect of this speech. And when Mrs. Caldwell found herself alone with Mrs. Frampton afterwards, she took occasion to say,

"You must please forgive our unmannerly cousin. His education was very much neglected. He is a rough diamond."

Mrs. Frampton said, incisively, "He should be cut."

Mrs. Caldwell, not choosing to understand the *équivoque*, remarked that the world was the best lapidary in such a case; and John Bloxsome had seen little of any other worlds than those of San Francisco and Pittsburgh.

"His father was one of my husband's greatest friends. He died many years ago, and since then John comes and goes as he likes in our house. I wish I could give him better manners, poor fellow!"

Mrs. Frampton pursed her lips, but made no rejoinder. She felt such doubt as to the intrinsic value of the diamond that silence was her only refuge.

Mordaunt, in the meantime, was impelled to say to Pierce,

"That's a queer fellow, that Bloxsome! Is he always like that, or has he some special grudge against us?"

"He is not always like that. I can't tell what has come to him. I'm afraid the truth is he doesn't like any one being more noticed than himself, especially an Englishman."

"What an ass! Where has the fellow lived all his life?"

"Oh! In a very narrow circle. Never was at a public school or at college. Now he lives chiefly between San Francisco and Pittsburgh."

Mordaunt whistled. "Ho! ho! I think I begin to understand. Is he well off?"

"Fairly so, I believe. But he never talks to me of his affairs. I've known him ever since I can remember, but, to say the truth, we have not much in common."

"So I should think. I like that young Brown much better, though he scowled at me awfully yesterday; but," he added, laughing, "I think to-day he has found out I am not such a bad chap after all."

No more was said, and as Bloxsome departed the next morning he was soon forgotten by our friends. Mordaunt set off the same day for his old brother-officer's ranch, not more than a hundred miles distant, whence he was to visit Pueblo, leaving his aunt and sister at "Falcon's Nest" for a week.

It was a pleasant, tranquil one to the small party, reinforced once or twice by visitors from Denver or Colorado Springs. But towards the end of that time, Grace watched eagerly for the arrival of each mail. She counted the days, the chances of delays and accidents; it was just possible, during the three weeks which had elapsed since she wrote to Ivor Lawrence, for an answer to have reached her. But none came. It was true she had given him no address, but he must

have known that anything sent to her home would be forwarded. His name was never mentioned between her aunt and herself, and she had so schooled herself as not to betray the anxiety she felt. Mrs. Frampton was of course ignorant that her niece had written to Lawrence, and did not suspect the torture of "hope deferred" which Grace suffered.

She rambled alone up the cañon sometimes, when she could slip out of the house unperceived by Doreen, who was generally her companion; and sitting down there among the rocks, her face dropped its mask, and her heart called aloud to the one man on earth for whom she felt she would make any sacrifice. Yes, though "the world" should henceforward eject him from its portals and brand him with infamy, though her kindred should refuse to receive one stained with so deep a dye, she would not hesitate to go to him, to share his obloquy, if only he would come to her with open arms and say, "You have believed in me hitherto; will you continue to believe in me, till death us do part?"

It was strange he should not write. Common courtesy demanded that he should answer her letter. But perhaps he was waiting to do so till he could tell her the result of the trial. She rarely saw an English newspaper. Mordaunt had one

sent him, but it arrived very irregularly; and, whether intentionally or not, he generally kept it to himself, or took it to his aunt's room to discuss the financial article. But now he was gone, and his papers were sent after him; and any chance of learning a decision in the law courts was at an end.

He wrote from his friend's ranch, fairly pleased with the life, "Charington is doing very well; and if a man sets himself, body and soul, to work here, on this gigantic farming scale, he may make a good thing of it. If I married, and gave up English politics, and was content to lead a purely pastoral life, I am sure I could make it answer. But Charington advises me strongly not to invest money in a ranch, unless I am prepared to devote myself to raising cattle, and so on. It is an awfully jolly life for a short time—I feel as fit as a four-year-old—but I fancy it would pall after a bit."

Then, from Pueblo, a few days later, he wrote, "'Real estate' in Pueblo! After all, *that* I believe is the investment that is the most absolutely certain of bringing in very large returns ultimately; for mines are always uncertain, are they not? And railways fluctuate. But in a rising city like this, land *must* increase rapidly in value, year by year. What do you say?"

"I say," wrote his aunt in reply, "that I can't trust my own judgment here, far less yours, my dear Mordaunt. All these speculations look so lovely on the spot that one must get at a little distance from them to judge if they stand upright and are as solid as they seem. I trust Pierce Caldwell implicitly—he is a fine fellow and a clever fellow, and he has done splendidly so far. But he is young, and naturally sanguine. Leave his mine and your Pueblo building speculation alone for the present. There can be no harm in a few weeks' delay."

And this advice was enforced with strong verbal exhortation when her nephew, drifted hither and thither by the contrary winds of transient enthusiasm, returned to the bosom of his family and held counsel with his aunt. But such counsel was not possible on the night of his arrival, which was coincident with the unexpected appearance of an omnibusful of young folks from Colorado Springs. This "surprise party" brought a fiddler with them, and were greeted by Mrs. Caldwell with a cordiality which indicated unbounded confidence in the resources of her larder. Mrs. Frampton stood aghast. She thought with what consternation the head of an ordinary household in England would view the inroad of a dozen hungry young men and women, prepared to make

a night of it, and, if heavy snow should prevent their departure, by no means indisposed to pass two or three under their friends' hospitable roof! Happily, in this case, the snow did not descend till they were gone, when it effectually blocked the mountain roads and the railways, delaying the Ballingers' departure two days. But this night, though dark and windy, was fine, and the heavily laden omnibus with its four horses performed the journey to and fro in safety, depositing its hilarious freight at their respective homes in the dawn of the winter morning.

To the elder Englishwoman, accustomed to the undemonstrative enjoyment of her own country-folk, the boisterous high spirits of these young people, under no conventional restraints but those of propriety, were a revelation. "Could they really *all* be as much amused as that?" she asked. "And was it necessary to make such a noise about it?" Grace declared that a pleasuring in the days of Queen Bess might have been in this wise, but not later, in England; not when the corrupt manners of the Stuarts, and the buckram and whalebones of the House of Hanover had rendered impossible all frank demonstrations of joyousness among persons "of quality." With what shouts of laughter these young Americans arrived! With what security they claimed their welcome!

Did ever the finest stroke of art arouse such tempests of hilarity as did this small and well-worn joke of the "surprise"? They danced with the vigor of Highlanders at a Northern meeting. Mordaunt, of course, led out all the girls in turn, and, Grace, though with no heart for capering, if the truth had been known, waltzed with most of the young men.

For this act of self-sacrifice, let us think, she had her reward, when, on the arrival of the mail, a few hours before the Ballingers were to leave the "Falcon's Nest," a thick packet was placed in her hand.

How she blessed that forty-eight hours' detention by the fall of snow! But for it she would not have received this letter, which had been already delayed, in transit, for many days. She hurried to her room and tore it open. It was a long document, extending over many pages, and this is what she read:

CHAPTER XXI

"KING'S BENCH WALK, *February 28th.*

"MY DEAR MISS BALLINGER,—I thank you heartily for your letter. It has brought the only great pleasure I have had for months. This has been a miserable time, but I hope and believe it is nearly over. Your letter is the first ray of pure light that has reached me ; I hail it as the dawn succeeding the black clouds that have overshadowed me and hidden you from my sight. You will say the dawn might have broken sooner; that I have wilfully deprived myself of that light, which, had I looked, I should have seen on the horizon. That is true ; and you who know me so well—better than any one, I believe —know my answer. I was too proud to go to you while this matter was pending, too sensitive as to what the world might say (and in that word I include your nearest relations) to appeal to you, to enlist your sympathy, to do aught which should force you into the position of my partisan. You have written, and my conscience is now clear in answering you. If I do so at some length, telling you my 'plain, unvarnished tale,' though it would seem tedious to many, I do not fear its seeming so to you.

"You have known me only as a poor, a very poor, man, struggling to make his livelihood, without influence, without prospects. My eccentric bachelor uncle, Mr. Tracy, my mother's brother, never gave me anything beyond a ten-pound note at Christmas. For many years I had every

reason to believe that he rather disliked me than otherwise. I never sought him; I had certainly no expectation of his leaving me more than, possibly, a small legacy. His other nephew, my first cousin, Giles Tracy, was generally regarded as his heir; and but for his conduct I have no doubt he would have continued to be so, as he unquestionably was a few years since.

"It is just five winters ago that I received what I should call a peremptory request, rather than an invitation, to go down to my uncle at once. I obeyed the mandate, and found him in a state of great exasperation. His solicitor, Mr. Eagles, was with him, and remained in the room all the time I was there. I little thought of what importance his presence might prove to me hereafter! Giles Tracy had been gambling, and had lost heavily at Monte Carlo. He had not ventured to apply to his uncle to pay his debts, knowing, in the first place, that he would be refused, and, secondly, that his prospects for the future might be seriously impaired with the crotchety old man. But a rumor had reached Mr. Tracy's ears, by some means or other—I never discovered how—that Giles had been to the Jews, and had borrowed largely at usurious interest, giving promissory notes, payable when he should inherit his uncle's fortune. It was to discover the truth in this matter that he sent for me. He expected me to ferret out the facts and report them to him. I refused to do so. He then got very angry, and said he would leave all his money to a hospital. I said he could do what he liked with his money—it was no business of mine—but he must take some other means of learning the nature of my cousin's monetary transactions. Giles and I had never been cordial friends, but I was not going to play the part of a detective

towards him. And with that, as my uncle now turned the vials of his wrath upon me, I left Mr. Tracy's house. I did not see him again for some time, but I have reason to believe that this—which was the only conduct any honorable man could pursue under the circumstances—far from alienating my uncle, was the real cause of his conceiving more regard for me. It was then he made the only other will that has been found, wherein he divided his property between me and my cousin. I had from him, in the course of the following summer, a note begging me to go to Tracy Manor; and during the last three years of his life I paid him several flying visits. Giles's name was rarely mentioned on these occasions; but he said once, looking at me in a marked manner, 'I have discovered all I wanted about that scamp, without your intervention.' What he had learned concerning him I know not, but that he *did* learn something, very much to my cousin's disadvantage, subsequently to the occasion I have named, is certain, and will, I fear, come out at the trial.

"I often found Mr. Eagles with my uncle, and one day, about two years before he died, he said to me, in Mr. Eagles's presence, 'I have cut Giles out of my will entirely, and have left all my money, as I told you I should, to a hospital.' I remember his looking at me very searchingly, as though he wished to see what impression his words made on me, and I remember also, distinctly, my reply: 'That is too cruel a punishment for the folly of youth.' '"Folly"?' cried my uncle. 'Do you call that folly, sir? I tell you he is a scoundrel!' If Eagles is forthcoming at the trial, he will remember that scene as well as the former one; he will recall my words and my uncle's.

"On my next visit to Tracy Manor, I heard incidentally

that Eagles's health had broken down, and that he had gone to New Zealand. He did so little business in the country town where he resided, that to give it up was no loss. The loss was to Mr. Tracy, whose amusement it seems to have been constantly to make fresh wills, or add codicils to old ones. I have found any number of draughts and memoranda in the old gentleman's hand, but the will he *professed* to have made in the spring of 1888, leaving all his money to a hospital, is not forthcoming. I find notes of increasing donations to myself, beginning in January, 1886—the date of my refusal to comply with his wishes as regarded Giles. Then comes the will I have already named, made in 1887. But all this, of course, is worth very little as evidence that I did not influence him; the only evidence of paramount importance is Eagles's. It was difficult to trace him at first, for he left no family in England, nor any address, being uncertain where he would go. But he has been found, and his evidence will have been taken on commission, I hope, if his health prevents his returning to England for the trial.

"The last time I saw my uncle he was very ill. Though I did not know he was dying, I felt confident he would never really recover, and I therefore resolved to speak to him about Giles. I had some difficulty in approaching the subject, but I referred to the last occasion when he had mentioned my cousin's name to me, and I said I hoped he would reconsider his decision. 'No,' he replied; 'my will is made; Eagles is gone; I am not going to alter the last will he drew up, and which I signed eighteen months ago. I haven't altered my mind, in any respect, since then.' 'I am sorry to hear it,' I replied; 'whatever faults Giles may have committed—' 'Call them by their right name,'

he interrupted, testily; 'call them *sins*.' 'Well, then, whatever sins he has committed, he is young; he has, probably, a long life before him; you brought him up to believe he would be your heir. It is cruel to cut him off absolutely, and without any hope for the future.'

"I traversed the same ground over and over again; I left the old man no peace; and at length I induced him to allow me to wire for an old solicitor, named Pringle, whom Mr. Tracy knew something of, from London. He promised me to add a codicil to his last will, devising the sum of twenty thousand pounds to his executors, in trust for his nephew, Giles Tracy, securing by this means that my cousin should not beggar himself by gambling. I did not remain in the room when he gave these instructions, for my uncle said he wished to be alone with Mr. Pringle; and he vouchsafed no hint of the main tenor of the will, which I then firmly believed devised the greater part of his fortune, as he had told me, to a hospital. Nor did I learn till his death, three months later, when this will was opened, that he had left the whole of his vast fortune, except this twenty thousand pounds, to me.

"Mr. Pringle predeceased my uncle; his testimony would have been valueless on the main points, inasmuch as he did no more than add this codicil to the will, which had been executed eighteen months before. But it would have gone to prove that Mr Tracy obviously chose that I should be kept in ignorance of the disposition of his money. He ordered me from the room, as I have said, before Mr. Pringle opened the will and read it to him, as the old lawyer told me afterwards, at my uncle's request. 'And his mind,' he added, 'was remarkably clear.'

"I have now shown you how false is the assertion that

I brought a lawyer to my uncle's death-bed, to reverse his will in my favor. It had been signed and attested eighteen months before, without my having any knowledge of its provisions. As to the second signature, which my cousin was foolish enough, at first, to dispute—if proved to be a forgery it would only affect his legacy of twenty thousand pounds!

"The world has been very ready to believe that I am a blackguard; therefore I have kept aloof, alike from friends and foes. I will neither conciliate the latter, nor oblige the former to declare themselves for me, until my name is cleared of this foul charge in the open court of law.

"When I heard I was my uncle's heir, my first Quixotic idea was to divide the fortune with Giles. That idea, of course, I soon dismissed, not alone on account of his attitude towards me, but because I felt I should not be justified in contravening my uncle's express wishes as regarded the fortune which his industry had built up. Could I think that Mr. Tracy had formed an unjust estimate of Giles's character, I can honestly say I would, even now, give him half the estate, regardless of the misconstruction such an act would meet with from the good-natured world. But I have ascertained that my uncle had ample reason for deciding as he did. I say no more. The trial will come on in a few days. Everything in law is uncertain—except the costs! Eagles is due this week. If he dies on the passage, or that by other misadventure his evidence is not forthcoming, I shall be bitterly, grievously disappointed. Not that it will affect the issue of the case. I know that my adversary cannot upset the will; he has not, legally, a leg to stand on. But between technical and

moral victory there is a wide difference. The attorney's testimony as to my uncle's anger against Giles, which led to his altering his will and sending for me—this, and his having been present at our interview, are of the utmost importance to *me*. Without this testimony I shall not feel that my character is completely cleared in the world's estimation. Is this over-sensitiveness? I do not think so; I am afraid you will. But at all events, whether I obtain this satisfaction or not, you will hear from me as soon as the trial is over. Until that time I must be silent; I can then, without fear of what man may say, ask you a question which I have not felt myself, hitherto, entitled to do.

"And so, my dear Miss Ballinger, for the present, farewell! Your very faithful friend,

"IVOR LAWRENCE."

The long strain was ended at last. Her joy found its vent in tears. What did anything signify now? Between the measured words, the self-imposed restraint, she read the truth—the truth which, she repeated to herself over and over again, she had known all along. Grace fell on her knees, there, beside the window, where she read the letter—the window which looked out on the rocky peaks and snowy summits of that wonderful region—and thanked God, child-like, for her deliverance from the sorest grief it is given humanity to suffer—disillusion.

When she arose, there was a light on her countenance which shone there all day. But those

who loved her, knowing naught of the letter, only said to each other,

"How radiant Grace looks—quite like her old self. At last she is beginning to forget!"

They left that hospitable home, to which they will always look back with grateful and pleasureable recollection, the next morning. Except on the higher peaks, and in the fastnesses of rock, the snow was gone. There is no thaw in that blessed region; the snow is absorbed by evaporation, and the rich brown earth appears from beneath it, offering at once a solid resistance to the feet of man and beast.

The Caldwells accompanied them to the depot, and there, while they were bidding the travellers good-by, a head appeared at the window of a private car, which seemed to Mordaunt like a direct manifestation that Providence was actively employed in his behalf. How otherwise could it be accounted for—surely not by mere paltry coincidence—that Mr. Planter should be travelling to San Francisco by this train, with his wife and daughter?

The greater part of the journey Mordaunt passed in that private car. Mrs. Frampton and Grace were also invited to take their seats in it, but they candidly confessed that they found it too fatigning to talk all day long in a train, and con-

fined themselves to paying a daily visit to the ladies at tea-time. At first, Grace had some ado to persuade her aunt to receive this small hospitality, or, indeed, to be passably civil. She was extremely annoyed at meeting these people, "the only ones," as she said, "on the whole of this continent, I particularly wished to avoid." But she was too clever not to accept the logic of events. Since the girl and her parents were there—under her nose—the best thing she could do was to study them, not to put herself in the wrong with Mordy, and so damage her influence, by her demeanor to his friends. The father belonged to a type she had not yet met, and him she soon got to like. He had no pretension of any kind, but possessed great shrewdness and considerable business capacity. Unfortunately, he had also an inveterate love of speculation. He had made three fortunes, and lost two. He spoke quite simply of his deficient education, his early struggles, his successes, and his failures. He was now on the top of the wave. But (Mrs. Frampton asked herself) how long would he remain there? As an acquaintance, she found him really quite interesting; he told her so much about railway stocks, in which he had a large amount of capital, and explained to her the resources of the country through which these lines passed. "But," as she

said to her niece, "clever and straightforward as the man is—and he does impress me with a great sense of straightforwardness—one would never feel safe with such a speculator! He told me openly he didn't wish his daughter to marry an Englishman, and though he would never forbid her marrying any one she loved, he would try and prevent it by all the weight of his influence. That is my only hope! I see Mordy is very far gone. But the girl does not care enough about him, I suspect, to oppose her father."

"Perhaps so. I am not sure. How do you like her? Don't you think, besides her beauty, that she is very attractive?"

"I am always attracted by beauty. You know it is a weakness of mine. And she has a nice voice and good manners. I won't say more at present. I must watch her. But if she was an angel straight from heaven, I shouldn't wish Mordy to marry a girl with such uncertain prospects."

Grace smiled.

"I suspect an angel straight from heaven would not come, 'in utter nakedness, but trailing clouds of glory!' Mr. Planter, who seems devoted to his daughter, would not allow her to be dependent on his speculative ventures, I should think. However, it is no use worrying about it, aunty,

one way or the other. The thing may never come to pass."

"No. Mordy suffers from chronic inflammation of the heart. Only he has the disease in rather a worse form than usual. I wish it had been Beatrice Hurlstone, however."

Her niece made no reply. It was wiser to let her aunt absorb and assimilate the Planter family slowly, than to cram them down her throat. And the next day Mrs. Frampton said,

"I have been talking a good deal to the mother. I don't dislike her. She is not as clever, she has not the worldly tact of Mrs. Hurlstone, and is evidently inferior to her daughter and to the husband, but I don't think she is a bad sort of woman."

"Certainly not. On the contrary, most amiable."

"She has been telling me a great deal about her girl's bringing up."

"Ah! That is a favorite subject of hers."

"She says they both prefer England to America."

"The daughter does not go that length, at present. Mr. Planter is a very indulgent husband and father, but I suppose he would not be pleased if he heard his wife say that."

Mrs. Frampton complained much of the tedium

of the journey, though the capacity of roaming through a long train of cars, of visiting, when so minded, the one devoted to refreshment, and of studying the Planter family at stated intervals, broke the monotony of those three days and nights. To Grace, her head pressed against the window most of the time, with a wonderful panorama rolling past her dreamy eyes, the time did not seem long. Her thoughts and heart were far away—now, in some foggy chambers in the King's Bench Walk, now in the yet foggier law courts. Therefore it was that her eyes looked dreamy, though they gazed on the grand scenery of the La Veta range till darkness swallowed it up, and though they opened at daybreak to find those mountains lying like a string of pink shells on the horizon, their bases still veiled in blue mists, while the tawny yellow prairie, and cliffs of sandstone in the foreground, were gradually being kissed into life by the rising sun. The whole of the journey was memorable for its beauty and strangeness, and will never be forgotten by that solitary watcher at the car-window, though it seemed at the time as though her mind were too much engrossed to be very sensitive to the impression of outward objects. Through the lovely plain of Utah, past Salt Lake City, surrounded by its still leafless gardens and or-

chards; over wild stretches of frozen prairie, where the little dogs came out of their holes and sat up, unafraid, on their hind-legs to watch the train; down, at twilight, into the very heart of purple-folded hills, clear-cut against the orange glow of sunset; boring its way through mighty walls of granite—the train sped on, till the morning of the third day broke and revealed a very different scene. It was as though a wizard's hand had touched the roadside, the vast stretches of garden and vineyard, with an emerald green, the vividness of which, no doubt, seemed greater by contrast with the midwinter the travellers had been looking upon but a few hours since. Here, in California, it was not spring, but already early summer; arum-lilies thrust up their sheafs of bloom behind the palings of little white-faced houses; great fruit farms were a-flush with almond, peach, and apricot-blossom; and here and there scarlet and gold flashed out among the greenery as the train rushed by.

To two young persons without much poetry in their composition—the one engrossed with his companion, the other pleased, amused, and flattered—these varying aspects of nature, and the sudden melting of the iron bands of winter, spoke only the dryest prose. It had been cold; was now suddenly warm; instead of snow and ice, green

blades of grass were sprouting everywhere. And that was all. Had they read, and if so did they understand, the sweet old fable of "The Sleeping Beauty" awakened by the magic horn of love? Certain it is that the fancy of neither suggested any analogy between that fable and the frost-bound earth casting off her fetters, under the warm breath of spring, arising and putting forth her tender buds, and bursting, after slumberous silence, into song. And no doubt it was just as well. Had either been of an imaginative temperament, he or she would not have suited the other —for all present purposes—as well.

On the third afternoon they entered the fair city of San Francisco.

CHAPTER XXII

Two young men were waiting at the depot, evidently prepared by telegram for Miss Planter's arrival. In the course of the evening several more appeared at the Palace Hotel, among them Mr. Bloxsome. And during the Planters' stay at San Francisco their rooms were scarcely ever free from her admirers, who came there sometimes "single spies," sometimes in "battalions."

These half-dozen young men were, one and all, beginning with John Bloxsome, unfavorable specimens of San Franciscan youth. One or two of them were handsome; one or two were apparently not ill-educated—but they had enjoyed few social advantages; they were loud and familiar; their standards of conduct were low; and they moved in a circumscribed orbit, outside which they neither knew, nor cared for, anything. Their attitude towards Mordaunt Ballinger was not openly inimical.

Civility, which would have been overpowering but that it lacked the ring of sincerity, was

the rule. They were always offering Mordaunt "drinks" at the bar, whenever he passed through the hall, or inviting him to go to a gambling-saloon, or to other resorts, all of which he rather loftily declined. Nor did they fare much better with Grace. She marvelled at Miss Planter's toleration. But early association, custom, and that wonderful adaptability of hers accounted for it, she supposed.

This only partially interfered with the intimacy, which chance had done so much to forward, between the Ballingers and the Planters, by the fact of their travelling those three days together. Mrs. Frampton would certainly have declined the drives to the Seal Rocks and the Presidio, the theatre parties and the expeditions by night to the Chinese Quarter, in which she and her niece joined, had her mind not been gradually inured to accept the idea of the Planters as of something which it was useless to try and avoid. And indeed, personally, she had no wish to avoid them. She was indisposed to accept the handsome American girl as a fitting wife for Mordaunt, but, short of this, she liked her fairly well; and with Père Planter she was now great friends. The mother and she had not much in common, and the young men annoyed her—perhaps too evidently. But, on the whole, there was no denying that the Planters'

being in the same hotel, and being so cordially disposed towards the English trio, made their stay at San Francisco far more agreeable than it would otherwise have been. That this should be so in the case of Mordaunt was a foregone conclusion. Yet, strange to say, he was the one who seemed least happy. What his aunt called the "braying chorus" disturbed his equanimity even more than it did hers. His manner towards these noisy young men had, it must be confessed, that exasperating superiority which is calculated to inflame animosity more than anything else. Clare —perhaps of set purpose—was occasionally capricious in her demeanor towards him. As a rule, she certainly showed more preference for the society of her English admirer than for that of any other man. But, now and again, she would, almost ostentatiously, choose Bloxsome or one of the "braying chorus" to walk with, or retire to a corner of the room with, and converse with in whispers, to Mordaunt's utter distraction. He did his best not to let his wretchedness be seen at such times, but to his aunt and sister it was only too apparent. This irritation was further aggravated by the receipt of letters which he burned, without naming them, at the time, but the effect of which was apparent to both Mrs. Frampton and Grace. The former was not altogether dis-

pleased. If, by suffering, the evil she dreaded could be averted, why, then, it was better so. But each, after her own fashion, acknowledged the obligations they were all under to the Planters.

"They certainly are very kind," said Mrs. Frampton; "much kinder than English people would be to three Americans of whom they knew so little. And what surprises me is that Mr. Planter should not avoid us altogether if he does not wish his daughter to marry Mordy. To *our* ideas it seems very odd—letting a man be with your daughter so much if you want to discourage him."

"That is because you do not understand the American character, and way of bringing up. Clare has never been controlled; she doesn't know what it means. She likes Mordy's devotion—up to a certain point—as she likes these other young men dangling after her. Whether it means more than this, as regards Mordy, I can't say. I doubt if she knows herself. She seems to me, every now and then, to be afraid; to be determined to make a stand; not to be hurried, and therefore to go on as she does with the others."

"I am very glad she does," said her aunt, decisively. "I like the girl, but she is an outrageous flirt; and Mordy's eyes had much better be open to the fact. All the same, it is not hu-

manly possible she can prefer any of those creatures to Mordy, and therefore I can't understand the father letting them be so much together."

"I am quite sure opposition would do no good. If she was curbed she would kick. Mr. Planter shows his wisdom in giving her her head."

"What a horsy illustration, my dear! What you say makes me feel more and more that the girl, attractive as she is—and I really *do* like her now—is not fitted for English domestic life. A woman who doesn't know what yielding means, and who wants a chorus of idiots, or of vulgarians like Mr. Bloxsome, round her, is not our ideal of a wife."

"She would be quite different when she married, aunt. That is the peculiarity of these Americans. They take their fun out as girls. When the serious business of life begins, and they are put into double harness—I declare I am getting horsy again!—they give up kicking and rearing, and settle down into a steady trot."

"Well, I shall never understand them—never! How a girl who knows what an English gentleman is like can for a moment tolerate such a set of men as I see round her! It passes all belief. How long does Mordy mean to stay here? As to business, it is all nonsense. He has left none of the introductions to business men which he

brought. The sooner we can get him away, the better."

"It will not make much difference. We are to go to Monterey, and so are the Planters."

Mrs. Frampton gave a gesture of impatience. "Do they do it on purpose?"

"No. Mordy does it on purpose. I knew it all along. But we are powerless, aunty. There is nothing for it but to yield with a good grace. If this thing is to be, it will be, and we must make the best of it. Neither Mr. Planter nor you will be able to prevent it. But I don't feel at all sure that the girl means to marry him."

"I hope to Heaven she doesn't!" ejaculated her aunt, and at the same moment Mordaunt entered with an open letter in his hand.

"This is the third blackguard anonymous letter I have received about the Planters," he said, as he pitched it into the fire. "Of course, it doesn't affect me one way or another. It is curious the writer should think an Englishman would pay any attention to such cowardly attacks on his friends. I should like to tell old Planter, but, of course, it's better not." Then he poked fiercely at the fire. There was a pause. Neither his aunt nor Grace chose to ask what the letters contained. But, after a moment, Mrs. Frampton said,

"When are you going on to Monterey? Soon, I hope?"

"Well, the Planters talk of going next week. I thought, if you don't mind, we might as well wait, and travel down with them."

"Why not go before them? I don't like arriving and departing together like a travelling troupe. And I don't like your being herded with all those men who crowd round Miss Planter. It is not dignified. You had far better leave the young lady a few days' uninterrupted enjoyment of her Californian admirers."

Mordaunt winced. "Miss Planter cares nothing for them or their admiration, I am sure. She has known many of them since she was a child. It is their way. It seems odd to you, aunt, but it means nothing."

"Oh! I don't pretend to understand their ways, only I don't admire them, that is all. And I particularly dislike your being mixed up with men who are as likely as not to pick a quarrel with you. They are all jealous of you. Under their smiling manner I can see that. That dreadful Bloxsome is the only one who has the courage to be downright rude. If you take my advice you will not prolong the situation."

Mordaunt took one or two turns through the

room. "Do you think one of those fellows can have written this letter?"

"How can I tell? I should think it not unlikely. I imagine from what you say it must be written by some one whose object it is to detach you from your friends. And certainly nothing that any of those men did would surprise me."

By an odd coincidence that same evening, as Mrs. Frampton sat in close confab with Mr. Planter, while the young people, under Mrs. Planter's chaperonage, were gone to the theatre, the American drew from his pocket two letters, and said, rather suddenly,

"Do you know a New-Yorker named John Reid?"

"Yes; a very nice man. I knew him in Boston, where his mother lives."

"Is he a great friend of Sir Mordaunt's?"

"I think he may be called so. They have not known each other very long, but Mr. Reid was very kind to my nephew in New York, and useful in giving him advice."

"They had no quarrel? You have no reason to suppose he would abuse your nephew?"

"Abuse Mordaunt? Good gracious! No. Why should he?"

"I don't know; only I have had a letter sent me purporting to come from him, and forwarded

by an anonymous correspondent. In that letter he says some very hard things of Sir Mordaunt. I like all that is open and fair, Mrs. Frampton. I don't much care about anonymous letters. But I get a lot of them all the time."

"Oh! It is a common practice here, is it? My nephew had one about you to-day, which he threw into the fire at once, Mr. Planter. He has had several, I believe. Any one who pays attention to an anonymous letter deserves to receive plenty, that is all I can say. But this other letter, abusing my nephew, is *not* anonymous, you say? If it pretends to be from Mr. Reid, it must be something worse."

"Yes. I strongly suspect, from what you tell me, it is a forgery. There it is. You can show it to your nephew. If he thinks it worth while, he can wire to Reid."

She gave Mordaunt the letter on his return that night.

When he opened it he was startled. The writing so closely resembled John Reid's, several of whose notes, referring to business matters, he had preserved, that it was difficult at first to pronounce this to be a forgery. He read it aloud to his aunt. There was no direction, nor indication as to whom the letter was addressed.

It ran thus:

"DEAR GEORGE,—You ask for my opinion of the Englishman, Sir Mordaunt Ballinger, whom you say you believe is a friend of mine. He *was* a friend of mine, until I discovered that he was a scoundrel, who ought not to be received into any respectable American house. His character is too well known in his own country for him to have any chance of retrieving his broken fortunes there by marrying an heiress. Therefore he has come here, laden with debt and dishonor, to try and induce some rich girl, for the sake of becoming 'My lady,' to marry him. On arrival, he first made up to Miss Hurlstone, but they soon saw that he was only a fortune-hunter, and showed him the door. Now I understand that he is pursuing Miss Planter. If you know the family, it would be but kind to warn them as to this Englishman's real character. He is a thorough profligate, and he has a contempt at heart for all that is American which he tries to conceal. It would be a sad day for any of our nice girls, in which she became his wife.

"I am, dear George, yours cordially,

"JOHN REID."

Mrs. Frampton was the first to speak.

"What do you mean to do? Wire at once?"

"Yes, for Mr. Planter's satisfaction, not mine. Of course I know Reid couldn't have written that. But of all the cowardly, damnable tricks— !"

"What did I tell you this morning? Some of these men, in their mad jealousy and envy, are capable of anything."

"I couldn't have believed it! I hope old Plan-

ter attached no weight to this precious communication?"

"No, or he would not have shown it to me. He suggested that it was a forgery with a calmness which showed that he regarded it as an everyday occurrence."

And a forgery it proved to be. The reply to Mordaunt's telegram came in these words:

"Have no correspondent named George. Have written no letter concerning you to any one."

Mordaunt took it to Mr. Planter.

"Is there no means of tracing the perpetrator of this vile fraud?"

The American shook his head, and smiled. "These lies are of no account with us, sir."

"So I should hope, but they are not the less disgraceful."

"I have thought it better to show the document to my daughter, sir. She is the person most concerned. It is but fair that she should judge whether what is here said of you is likely to be true."

"The only part she might possibly believe is that about Miss Hurlstone. Well, it is a lie, Mr. Planter. She was the first pretty girl I saw in New York, and I flirted with her once or twice, as any fellow might. She was never anything to

me, and from the moment I saw your daughter I never thought of any other girl. I have asked her to marry me, and she has refused. But I'm not discouraged. I'm still in hopes of getting her to alter her mind, and—and of getting your consent, Mr. Planter."

"Well, sir, I will be frank with you. I let Clare do pretty much as she likes, and I have no objection to you personally. You seem to me a straightforward sort of man, who are only a bit spoiled, I reckon, by the life you have led. I don't want my child to marry an Englishman, or any other sort of foreigner. She is the only thing I have got in the world, and I want her to settle right down here in America, near me and her mother, when she marries. There now, you have it plain. I like you better than the men who are fooling around here. But they don't amount to much. She would never have one of *them*. Our girls like amusing themselves; it don't mean anything. And if you come right along with us to Monterey, you must do it at your own risk, sir—as I told your aunt. You must not reproach Clare with having led you on, when she meant nothing. And she would never marry without my consent."

This was plain speaking, and it certainly was not encouraging. Mordaunt felt that to follow

his aunt's suggestion, and precede the Planters to Monterey, was the only manly course, consistent with his resolve not to be deterred in his endeavor to win Clare Planter's affections. To continue to take part in the "braying chorus" could not be profitable, and would certainly not be dignified. Mrs. Frampton received the announcement that they were to leave San Francisco the following day with a satisfaction which she was at no pains to conceal.

That afternoon he had the courage to avoid joining the Planter party, on the plea that he must go to some shops with his aunt and sister. So, leaving the lower streets, where the chief traffic of the city is, they climbed steep ways where the Chinese and Japanese dwell in colonies, and visited tea-houses and joss-houses, and bought quaint toys and strange wares unknown to Liberty & Co. And afterwards, still toiling up, they reached the eminence generally called Nob Hill, crowned with structures that look like Genoese palaces, until one learns that what simulates marble is but painted wood. These residences of the wealthy merchants are all embowered in green. Flowers look out of every gate and doorway. As to the arum-lilies, they grow like weeds, thrusting their white, elongated faces through the fences of even the smallest houses ; and wherever there is

space to let them stretch their mighty plumes, palm-trees and yuccas stand between the windows and the dusty street.

The ladies returned to the hotel, pleased with their last ramble through the city, of which they had seen more that day than they had done during all their drives the previous week. But Mordaunt was silent and depressed. His self-confidence was shaken. Had he made any progress since they arrived at San Francisco, ten days ago? He could not feel that he had.

Clare Planter came into their room at dusk, apparently in high spirits. She looked unusually well in a white tea-gown, with some crimson roses on her bosom.

"So I hear you go to Monterey to-morrow. What a shame to steal a march upon us! And what a shame not to have passed the last day here with us, Mrs. Frampton!" she exclaimed. "But you must really come in this evening. We are going to dance. Two or three girls are coming, and I have been to get a pianist. Don't shake your head—I am sure, Sir Mordaunt, you can persuade your aunt and sister to come, if you like."

"Thank you," he stammered, growing hot and cold as he spoke. "It's awfully good of you—but—as for myself, I—I promised to go to the Bohe-

mian Club to-night. Some fellows asked me to supper there—"

"Oh!" she interrupted, with her sweetest smile, "Ask the 'fellows' to come to us—bring them along with you. You can't refuse me—now can he, Mrs. Frampton?"

"I should be ashamed of him if I didn't think he could resist temptation," laughed his aunt.

"You do not mean that you refuse me?" She turned her sweet, smiling face to him.

"I am sorry I am engaged," he replied, quickly, without looking at her. "You have so many men—so many more than ladies—you can't want me. My aunt and my sister must answer for themselves."

She was so little used to contradiction that she seemed literally struck dumb. Who was this man, whom she regarded as her slave, that he dared resist her sovereign will and pleasure?

"Grace and I will look in to wish you good-by, after dinner. But it is not 'good-by' for long, I believe?" said Mrs. Frampton, in high good-humor at Mordaunt's firmness. He was really behaving better than she expected.

"Perhaps — I don't know," responded Miss Planter, as she twirled the tassel that hung from her waist round her finger, and then untwirled

it. "Some of my friends are going to Santa Barbara. Perhaps mamma may go there instead."

"Your father spoke very distinctly this morning of going to Monterey," said Mordaunt, flushing suddenly.

"Oh, yes; but papa will always do as mamma and I ask him. That is the advantage of having an American husband. Englishmen are not like that—they can refuse anything!"

She stung him with one sharp look from her beautiful eyes, and, with a little *au revoir* to the ladies, swept from the room.

"If they go to Santa Barbara, I shall follow them," said Mordaunt, recklessly, as soon as the door was closed.

Grace looked up, with a smile.

"They will not go to Santa Barbara."

CHAPTER XXIII

If anything could have raised Mordaunt's spirits that night it would have been his supper with the joyous Bohemians—listening to their banjos and bright choruses, and hearing the tales of the "high jinks" they hold in the neighboring forests in spring-time. Many members of that genial club were charming enough to make him forget that they were fellow-townsmen of vulgarians like Bloxsome, but nothing could disperse the cloud that overshadowed him.

The girl had grown dearer to him every day, and yet she seemed further from him than ever. He would not blame her, still less would he have allowed any one else to do so. Had she not said, only six weeks ago, that she did not like him well enough to marry? Except during those three days in the train together—those three unforgetable days—they had never been alone, as they then virtually were, and nothing had passed to justify him in the belief that her heart had softened. On the contrary, she seemed to have

taken special pains to prevent his forming such an erroneous idea. She treated him only a little better than the other young men round her—just so much as to rouse their jealous animosity—not enough to distinguish him as the one she had chosen from all the world. Though he had defended her against his aunt's insinuations, as regarded the "braying chorus," he did not feel the less secretly hurt. Therefore it was that he was here at the Bohemian Club to-night, instead of gliding round the Planters' sitting-room, with his arm round Clare's waist.

He did not see the Planters the following morning. Mrs. Frampton and Grace had wished them good-by the previous evening, and they were off early with a large party to San Rafael. Before the Ballingers left San Francisco that day the English mail had arrived, bringing nearly a week's budget of letters and papers. There was food enough for the mind, and to spare, to last them that short journey.

Mordaunt and his aunt sat together at the end of the car, Grace by herself a little distance off. Her letters were not very interesting, but she had several papers which Mordy had handed to her; only the last issues he and his aunt were reading. The debates naturally claimed the young member's first attention; the society journals and

Pall Mall Gazette gossip as naturally claimed Mrs. Frampton's.

"Look! Look here!" she whispered, suddenly, turning to her nephew, and pointing to a paragraph. "Do you see this? Have you looked at the law reports?"

Then he read the following:

"The termination of the great will case yesterday is a triumph not only to Mr. Ivor Lawrence's personal friends, but to all lovers of fair play who have declined to prejudge the case, and who have viewed with grave reprehension the disposition in society to believe the allegations recklessly brought against a gentleman who had always enjoyed an unblemished reputation. Mr. Ivor Lawrence has suffered most cruelly during the past eight months, and it is but just that the false accusations he has labored under should recoil upon the head of Mr. Giles Tracy, who, without the smallest evidence, dared to bring these charges against his cousin. That the course of the trial brought to light certain facts not wholly creditable to the accuser was the penalty he paid for his rashness."

Mordaunt turned to the law report in the *Times*, and there read, at large, the collapse of the first day. It had been expected it would extend over several, but Mr. Eagles's testimony was so complete and crushing that Giles Tracy's counsel had no choice but to withdraw. Unfortunately for him, this withdrawal was not before certain indelible stains had been left on the young

man's character by the solicitor's evidence as to the cause which led to the estrangement between the testator and his favorite nephew, an estrangement which hardened into virulent aversion as time revealed, more and more, Giles's true character. At the period of Eagles's last interview with his client, he had no idea Mr. Tracy could ever be persuaded to add a codicil to his will leaving Giles twenty thousand pounds. He felt sure that nothing but Mr. Lawrence's strong representations could have brought him to do this. Mr. Eagles had made no less than four wills for Mr. Tracy. He believed all had been destroyed but this last one, in which he left everything to Mr. Lawrence. Mr. Tracy did not wish this to be known—least of all by the nephew he resolved to make his heir—hence his fiction about the hospital.

When Mordaunt had read rapidly the half-column which contained this report, and had handed it to Mrs. Frampton, he sat brooding until she had finished. The silence was broken by her saying,

"H'm! It is most unfortunate! I mean unfortunate *just now*, when one wants to distract her mind from the subject. The man has behaved disgracefully to *her*, at all events, and the sooner she forgets him the better."

"Yes, of course; that's all right. But I must show her the paper."

"I don't know what to say to that. She looks so much brighter lately. I hope she is beginning to forget. I watch her when she little thinks I am doing so, and I see a great change for the better. I am afraid this news will undo it all, by turning her thoughts again entirely upon this wretch, whom I hate and abominate—for he has been the only cause of real dissension between Gracey and me."

"Can't help that, aunty. She *must* know. There's no help for it. It's an awful bore. Confound it! everything seems to go wrong since we came to California!"

Then, with a sigh which appeared to have its birth in his boots, and went quivering up his frame, he rose and walked down the car to where his sister sat.

"Look here, Gracey. Here's something you'll be glad to read. I don't like the fellow. I think he behaved like a cad, though I stuck up for him that night at Mrs. Reid's, just to please you. But, of course, I'm glad to know he is not a scoundrel."

Her eyes sparkling, her face a-flush with excitement, she had seized the paper from his hand, even while he spoke, and her eyes ran rapidly

down the column to which he pointed. When she had done, a sweet smile played upon her lips. She leaned her head upon her brother's shoulder, and whispered,

"I never doubted him about this, or—or anything else, dear. You must never abuse him again —never—*never*, Mordy. He is the soul of honor, and of all that is noble and high-minded. His very faults are grand faults. You will learn to see that soon, dear—you will, indeed. And so will aunty, when—when it all comes right."

The branching of wide-armed cypress-trees, and the incense of sweet flowers was all they knew in the young moonlight, as they drove from the depot—surely the most poetical railway-station in the world—through the pleasure-grounds of the wonderful hotel at Monterey. They alighted at the terrace of a huge, irregular building, and the next minute found themselves in a big hall, crowded with ladies, some in evening dress, some with hats and jackets ready to sally out into the moonlight, and men smoking, drinking coffee, reading telegrams, or gathered in knots round two or three of the most favored ladies in rocking-chairs. Some of these were pretty, some, according to British ideas, very much over-dressed for the occasion; all seemed to be enjoying themselves thoroughly, and not to

be afraid of showing that they were. Small children were running in and out between elderly gentlemen's legs. Young men were strolling in the corridors, looking at the billiard-players through the open door, and stopping to chaff the knots of young girls, clinging to each other with the effusive affection born of twenty-four hours' acquaintance. Aged ladies had bezique-boards between them, but were interchanging remarks in high-pitched voices, none the less. Aged men were discussing Mr. Blaine's projects, the World's Fair, and canned fruits with equal vehemence. The babel of tongues, from the piercing falsetto of childhood downwards, was deafening to the travellers as they entered, but the scene was so gay, so pervaded with *bonhomie*, that even Mrs. Frampton declared later that it was amusing—"amusing to *watch*. It would be a delightful place for deaf persons to come to. So lively. And the drum of *their* ears would run no risk, you know."

In the morning, Grace looked out on the most lovely garden of its kind she had ever seen, with glimpses of a sapphire-colored sea between the red-lilac stems of pines and the gnarled boles of ilex. On the other side a little lake, surrounded by palms and bamboos; in the foreground beds of cineraria and sweet-smelling stock, with bunches

of arums and lilies raising their white crests above the masses of rich color. The fresh morning air came up laden with the first breath of the flowers. As soon as she was dressed she went out and watched the Chinese gardeners at work on their borders of floral embroidery, and wandered through the winding groves, across the railway and over the sand-hills that slope to the beach, where she sat down awhile, and felt tranquilly happy. It was good that her happiness had come to her here, where there were no jarring elements; where no constant social effort was needed; where nature was so rich, so fragrant, so untroubled. She could not have nursed the peace at her heart so securely in those great cities; even the wild crags and snowy fastnesses of beautiful Colorado, much as she loved them, would have harmonized less with her present mood than did the white-lipped sea curling on the yellow sand, and the tranquil spaces of lofty shadow in the garden, upheld by the mighty columns of the Californian pines.

The only cloud in the sky that day—and she could not feel that it was one impenetrable to the sun—was her brother's gloom. He thought that he need make no exertion with his aunt and his sister to assume a cheerfulness he did not feel, and he looked as miserable as a man who has not lost

his appetite can look. Mrs. Frampton was much concerned. She tried to talk of investments, but failed to rouse his interest. He was clearly in a bad way, in a worse way even than she had suspected. She was thankful to have got him from San Francisco. But now that they had brought him away, what were they to do with him, without companions, without purpose or occupation? As she watched him at breakfast, slowly consuming an egg, with the air of an early martyr, she felt at her wit's end what to do. However, they must not all three sit still; movement was better than inactivity. She wisely insisted on their going the famous "seventeen-mile drive," and taking luncheon with them. She gave him a French novel, and bade him supply himself with an unlimited amount of tobacco. She took for herself an eider-down cushion and a sketch-book. And thus armed against *ennui*, if the drive should prove disappointing, they started.

Though they drove along those shores repeatedly during the weeks they remained at Monterey, it never, perhaps, looked quite as beautiful as it did that morning. The sea was a wonderful color, more like the iris with which the pine wood they first drove through was carpeted than anything else in nature. Above the pine-needles and these purple-blue irises rose bushes of pink

berberis, until the road opened out upon a wide down, fringed with rocks overhanging the sea. To-day there was a west wind, which lashed it into white foam, not only against the cliffs, but far as the eye could reach. Presently they gained a group of island-rocks, two of which were literally covered with seals, whose roaring and strange plaintive cries were heard more than a mile off. On the summit of their home they lay dark and inert, sun-dried, and probably asleep. Lower down they were sprawling and floundering about, of a pale dun color, ever and anon plunging into the foaming waves, such a picture of innocent enjoyment that it was pleasant to know they were never molested. They only frequent certain portions of the coast, and considering that they deprive the fishermen there of a large portion of their spoil, it is creditable that the law which forbids them to be destroyed or disturbed is so rigidly respected.

Soon after leaving this interesting colony, our friends came upon that unique feature of this coast, the great cypress forest, which affronts the winds and waves, stretching out into the very sea itself, a sentinel now and again thrust forward upon some prominent crag, its strong gray arms lifted defiantly against the foam that breaks impotently over it. The "cypresses," as they are

here called, closely resemble the cedars of Lebanon, and have no apparent relation to the columns of solid foliage usually associated with the name. Here and there the bleached skeletons of these mighty trees, silver-lighted in the sun, some still erect in death, some prone upon the sweet, warm grass that crowns the pink-gray rock, tell with magic brilliancy against the broad sovereignty of impenetrable green that dominates the sea. As Grace beheld these gnarled trunks and twisted branches, bearing their solemn crowns aloft, and immovable above the assaults of lightning and of wind till death uncrowns and unrobes them, she felt that this was the realm of epic poetry, the ocean-forest of imagination, a kingdom unrivalled upon earth for its majesty of color and richness of suggestion.

And now they rounded point after point, and she cried aloud to her companions in her glee, and they responded after their kind. The same elements formed fresh combinations at each turn —the rocks standing out like castles in the sea, the cypresses, a beleaguering army, now advancing, now retreating, their dead lying round them unmourned, slain in the mighty battle with the winds of heaven, where, after centuries of strife, they had fallen, and others had stepped forward from the ranks to take their place.

In one of these little bays they stopped the carriage, and unpacked their basket. And when they had all eaten Mrs. Frampton sharpened her pencil, and attacked the scene with characteristic vigor. She was not going to be beaten by the convolutions of a few trees—and those American trees, too. Mordy smoked his pipe in silence, and fell asleep. Grace rose, and wandered down among the rocks.

Just after this another carriage drew up a little distance off, from which a man alighted. If not an Englishman, he was very like one. In age he appeared to be near forty; strong, somewhat broad, and not very tall. He could not be said to be handsome, his upper lip, from which the hair was ruthlessly cut, being too long and straight. But he had fine, fearless eyes, and his brow was broad and massive. His walk was full of decision, and in his Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers he had the look of a man who would never waver, never turn back, nor give in, under any ordinary strain, physical or mental. He stood still for a moment, taking in the scene—in the foreground Sir Mordaunt Ballinger, Bart. and M.P., asleep, with his head on an eider-down cushion; not far off Mrs. Frampton, spectacles on nose, her attention riveted on that group of hoary cypresses; the coachman beyond, devour-

ing the remains of the luncheon. Was there no one else? No. His eye scoured the scene; then, making up his mind that the person he sought must be hidden from him by the underwood and rocks, he strode down, unobserved by Mrs. Frampton, to the edge of the cliff.

She was sitting on a rock, sheltered by the trees from the west wind, her eyes fixed on the purple sea, with its green stains and white lips curled in anger against the pebbles on the shore below her, when she heard a rustle in the grass, the crackling of a twig, and, looking up, saw Ivor Lawrence before her.

He had been present so vividly to her mind's eye the moment before that she was scarcely startled. She caught her breath, her cheek turned pale, before the blood rushed violently back there; that was all, as she stammered out,

"Mr. Lawrence! How wonderful!"

He took her hand in both his, and held it for a moment or two before he sat down beside her.

"Yes, it is wonderful to meet you in such a spot after our long separation. I started immediately the trial was over. I had made all my preparations beforehand, and vowed that nothing should keep me a day."

"We only received the papers with the result of the trial yesterday."

"I came over in the ship that brought the mails. Had I known your address I should probably have been here before them. But I had to wait in New York, to learn from your bankers where you were." Then he leaned forward and looked yet more intently into her face. "You *knew* that I should come—and come at once, did you not?"

"I—thought you would—if you could—but, of course, I couldn't feel sure." Then she added, with that burst of sunshine in her face, and that rare naturalness which belonged to her, "But, oh, how glad I am! How wonderful it is to see you here, after all these months—here, in this lovely spot, when I have been thinking of you in London fogs! Oh! that horrid trial! How thankful you must be it is over!"

"Yes—not that I had, latterly, any anxiety as to the result. From the moment I knew Eagles was alive I knew I was safe. If Eagles had not turned up, some good-natured people might still have doubted me."

She looked at him with her quickly-flashing eye, and the color mounted again to her cheek.

"No one who knew you—who *really* knew you—could ever have doubted, though the trial had gone against you over and over again!"

"I like to hear you say that. You can't repeat

it too often; it is worth all the fortunes—all the triumphs in the world to me; it means my whole happiness in life. You have never doubted, through my silence, that I loved you better than anything in the world? You understood how it was that I kept silent till I could face your brother, your aunt, every one, without the suspicion of a stain upon my name?"

"No; I have never doubted, in my inmost heart, though I blamed you," she said, and the tears now rained down over her cheeks. He threw his arms round her, and kissed the tears away.

"My darling! it was my great love for you—my desire that your name should not be bandied about in connection with mine as long as this accusation hung over my head."

She smiled up at him through her tears, while her head lay upon his breast, and said, with a little gesture of negation,

"'Perfect love casteth out fear.'"

Nearly an hour later, Mrs. Frampton, having finished her sketch, went in search of Grace. The sight which met her when, after hunting about for some time, she reached the little cove of rocks where her niece and a man were seated, their heads very close together, nearly caused the good

lady a fit. Grace — Grace, of all the girls in the world! She was thunderstruck. She could hardly believe her eyes. The man's back was turned to her. She uttered a loud exclamation and dropped her parasol.

Grace sprang up, ran towards her aunt, and embraced her. At the same moment her companion turned, and Mrs. Frampton recognized in him the man she had been abusing for the last eight months.

It was an awkward moment for her, but she was equal to the emergency. She seized the situation at a glance; congratulated him on the result of the trial; reproached him roundly for his silence; and, if I may paraphrase the poet, "saying she would ne'er forgive, forgave him." How could she do otherwise? She was too clever a woman to stick to her small field-pieces, when she found they were only loaded with blank cartridge.

Mordaunt joined them soon afterwards, and behaved like a good fellow as he was, first of all, and a man of the world as he was, afterwards. He grasped with heartiness the hand of the man whom he knew now was to be his brother. And in the ruddy gold of waning day, behind the dark columns of the trees, the four drove back to Monterey.

CHAPTER XXIV

THREE days later, Mordaunt, who inquired at the office every morning whether Mr. Planter's family was expected, learned that the best suite of rooms was retained for that gentleman, who was expected to arrive from San Francisco the same afternoon. His watchful aunt detected the change in his glad face when he sat down to breakfast, and she guessed the cause.

They arrived, happily without followers, though Clare took pains to let it be known that "some of her friends" were coming to Monterey for the night on Sunday. She met the Englishman's fresh demonstration of delight at having her here to himself once more, as she always met such calls, with every outward token of pleasure and response. Did he delude himself?—or was there even a touch of something more, something which had not been there in her manner to him hitherto? Be that as it may, she had no idea of not letting him know how much his conduct at San Francisco had displeased her. They were alone

in the garden, the first morning after their arrival, when she said,

"You were awfully cross and disagreeable at San Francisco, Sir Mordaunt. I am glad to see you are ever so much nicer here."

"Well, there was good reason for my being cross there."

"Because of my friends? No; *you* were not at all nice to *them*. That was the trouble."

"Not nice? I like that! Come, come, the worm will turn at last. I don't want to say anything disagreeable about your friends. But be honest, confess that they insinuated every sort of villainy about me behind my back, though they *were* so sugary to my face. You know as well as I do that one of them wrote those anonymous letters."

"I know nothing of the kind."

"Then I do. The expressions in one of the letters I received are identically the same that—well, I won't say *who* used to my sister when speaking of you and your father. Of course, I didn't care a brass farthing."

"No one does in San Francisco. People get them all the time, and no one pays any heed to them. That was no excuse for your treating my friends *de haut en bas*, as you did. It was very rude of you—very rude to me. And then, that last night when I begged you—I actually

begged you—to come to us, and you refused! After all your protestations. I never heard of such a thing!"

"I protest nothing more than I feel; indeed, much less. It is because I *do* feel that I can't stand that lot of cads, what my aunt calls 'braying' round you. If you prefer them—well, then you'd better say so, and I'll retire. I hope I have the pluck to take my defeat like a man."

"I have no doubt you will, with perfect equanimity," she said, resentfully.

"Well, you remember what I told you at Brackly. I can't talk a lot of sentimental rubbish. It isn't in my line. If you send me about my business, I shall be awfully cut up. I shall never be quite the same fellow I was, again, I fancy. And if you told me to wait, I'd do it, if you thought you would get to care for me. But to make one of the crowd, and see you encouraging them—no, I can't, and I won't. I'd rather take the first train to New York, and return to Europe at once."

"You are quite at liberty to do so. If you expect an American girl to give up her old friends, at your dictation, you are mistaken."

"'Friends' is a convenient term. If they were your real friends I'd try and make them mine. They want to be something more, and are in reality much less. I shouldn't blame them for admir-

ing you, God knows, if they were true, honest fellows; but they are not. They are double-faced. They are humbugs."

"The fact is, you are jealous of them," she said, laughing.

"I am not so stupid as to be seriously jealous of any one of them; but I am jealous, as every Englishman is, of the girl he loves wasting her sweetness—stooping to encourage a lot of men he thinks in every way her inferiors."

"Dear me! Men are very troublesome," said Miss Planter, stooping to pick a rose, "and Englishmen are the worst of all. John Bloxsome says—" Here she stopped short.

"What does Mr. Bloxsome say?"

"He says the English are the most arrogant nation on the face of the earth, and I am afraid he is right! You are awfully stuck up, you really are."

"Perhaps I am, as an Englishman. I am proud of being one. Not as myself, Mordaunt Ballinger. I have nothing to be stuck up about."

"No, indeed!" pursued the girl, relentlessly. "You are very nice, of course, and all that. But there is nothing so wonderful about you."

"Nothing—except my love for you."

He said this with an earnestness unlike himself.

The girl laughed, but the color deepened on her cheek, as she replied, lightly,

"Do you mean it is wonderful you should care for any one?—or wonderful that I should be the present object of your affections? I am told they change every month."

"I recognize Mr. Bloxsome there. What I meant was, that I never expected—that it was wonderful to find myself caring about any girl as I do about you."

Miss Planter turned away, and began humming "*La donna e mobile.*" But there was a curious expression on her face, an expression which he would probably have been incapable of reading, had he seen it. It told of an internal struggle between the forces which are ever at war in such a woman's complex character.

"All my friends whom you abuse would give up anything for me."

"Would they? Try them. That's all!"

"While you would sacrifice nothing, not even your pride. Look at the other night!"

"You call it pride; I call it honesty. I won't take the hands of fellows I despise, men who *forge*, men who write lies about me to your father, and lies about your father to me. That's a sort of sacrifice you've no right to ask. I simply *can't* make it. If Bloxsome were to come here I am

afraid I should kick him. Ask any other sacrifice, and I'll make it; my English home, my seat in Parliament, I'm afraid I'd give them all up, though I know it would be wrong, if you wished it. As to money, I don't want your father to give you a penny. I'm not rich, but I have enough to support a wife. All I want is that you should care enough for me to give up those fellows for my sake."

She looked at him for a moment, steadily. Then she said, with a flickering smile,

"No. I am not going to give up all independence of action yet. But here is a *boutonnière* for you," and she gave him the rose she had just gathered.

Nevertheless the young lady sent off three telegrams that afternoon, couched in the same terms:

"Sorry cannot see you on Sunday. Shall be engaged all day."

Three weeks slid by; weeks all too brief for four out of the group of friends, two of whom had nearly reached the full of happiness, while two were in the crescent stage, nearing, day by day, the second quarter.

Clare Planter's conquest was a slow one, if indeed that may be called a conquest which is not

as yet proclaimed. Mr. Planter's sudden decision to leave Monterey—unshaken, for once, by his wife's and daughter's supplications—was due, no doubt, to some indication on Clare's part that the Englishman was beginning to be not absolutely indifferent to her. As long as she encouraged a number of other admirers her father was not alarmed. But when he learned that, on one pretext or another, she had put some of them off on three successive Sundays (the only day they could get away from business), when he saw that the Englishman had undisputed possession of the field, he grew uneasy. He spoke with great frankness to Mrs. Frampton.

"I am going to take my daughter right home. My wife doesn't like it, but I think it wiser. And I have refused to allow her and Clare to go to Europe this year. It is about the first time I ever refused them anything. You and I, Mrs. Frampton, are of one mind—I don't want my daughter to marry an Englishman; you don't want your nephew to marry an American."

"Pardon me, Mr. Planter," she replied, with a boldness begotten of the occasion. "I have no objection to my nephew marrying an American; and if I had twenty objections they would be of no avail with him on that subject. I see that now. He has some regard for my opinion,

but where his feelings are concerned he consults no one. They are very deeply concerned, I am afraid, in this case. He is not rich, and I should like him to marry a girl with some *secured* fortune. That is the only objection to his marrying your daughter that I can conceive upon our side, though it would not weigh with him for a moment. I understand that business men in America, as a rule, do not make settlements on their daughters when they marry?"

"That is so. But—" Here he paused, then went on. "We need not enter upon that matter. I trust Sir Mordaunt's feelings are not as deeply engaged as you imagine. I trust separation for a year will effectually cure him, and prevent this folly going any further. Clare knows my views on the subject; she has never admitted that she likes your nephew more than as a friend. Now, then, with a little tact, a little firmness, it seems to me the thing may be nipped in the bud."

"I am afraid it is beyond the bud stage. Shall you forbid their corresponding?"

"Forbid? No, indeed, that would be the worst course. I shall tell Sir Mordaunt frankly that I cannot ask him to Pittsburgh, and that I do not wish him and Clare to meet for the present. In the summer I shall take the best cottage I can find at Newport, and entertain there, and have a

yacht, and let my girl have a good time. It will be strange if some fine young fellow there can't make her forget this fancy—if she really *has* any fancy—for your nephew."

Mrs. Frampton did not think it would be at all strange, but she held her peace. She believed this to be more than a "fancy" on the girl's part. There was, however, the fact, so difficult to explain, that she still refused to bind herself by any pledge. She told Mordaunt she liked him "awfully," but—but—she was not sure of herself; and then papa would offer so many objections. In short, as his aunt knew, he had been again refused. Nevertheless, a strong impression remained on Mrs. Frampton's mind that this was by no means final; and that clever lady had now hoped, but failed, by a *coup de main*, to wrench from Mr. Planter some avowal of what he would do for his daughter if, as Mrs. Frampton put it to Grace, "the worst comes to the worst."

To the young man, the worst—as it seemed to him, at least—had come, when he held Clare's hand for the last time, in the garden, the morning of her departure.

"You will forget all about me, and be snapped up by some New York dude—I know you will," he said. "A whole year without seeing you! It is too awful!"

"You said something about writing to me," she observed, with a smile. "How can I possibly forget you, if I have to answer your letters? Besides, I have your photograph."

"But you wouldn't give me yours."

"Oh! American girls don't give their photographs, unless—their position is different to mine. But I shall have that stalwart form, that magnificent moustache before me, on my writing-table, to refer to, in case my memory becomes hazy. I don't see how I can forget you."

She gave a little laugh, which lacked solidity; he looked hurt.

"If you'd give me some sort of promise; if you'd hold out some sort of hope that in a year's time—"

"Oh, dear! how tiresome you are!" she cried. "Can't you understand? can't you see that only time and separation can show whether I really and truly care for you?—care for you enough to run counter to all papa's wishes—dear, good old papa, whom I hate to grieve? Nothing would justify my doing this but caring about a man very, *very* much. I do care for you! There, I have said it. But I don't know how much till I get away from you. When a man is about you, all the time, it is awfully hard to tell exactly how much you care for him. And if my caring

doesn't stand this test, depend on it you will be much better without me."

Here Mr. Planter's voice was heard, shouting,

"Clare! Where are you? We are waiting."

Their hands met, and remained clasped a few seconds. Then they turned quickly towards the hotel, where the omnibus was standing, ready laden.

In New York, a fortnight later, on the eve of embarkation, Grace, who had written to Mrs. Courtly to announce her engagement, received the following letter:

"*May* 1*st.*

"My dear Miss Ballinger,—Accept my hearty congratulations and best wishes for your happiness. This good news comes to cheer me to-day, when I feel very sad at heart. It was impossible for me to doubt, even on our short acquaintance, that whoever was fortunate enough to win you would be no ordinary man. I rejoice to learn that you have found one to whom you can give, not only your whole heart, but your whole respect and admiration. Poor Quintin Ferrars! It would not have been possible for you to do that, under any circumstances, in his case. He is now free from the terrible millstone which hung round his neck more than ten years. But of what avail is his freedom? He will never marry again. He understood, after his last interview with you, how utterly hopeless his suit was, and he sailed last month for Honolulu. You may not be aware that he studied medicine in early life, and the circumstance of being left a moderate fortune,

combined with his taste for literature, alone prevented his following it as a profession. He is now resolved to devote himself, for some years to come, to alleviating, as far as he can, the condition of the unhappy lepers in the islands. I cannot but feel that the change in my cynical and, as many thought, purely selfish friend, is due entirely to you. You first made him feel the uselessness of his life. If knowing you has led him to experience the most poignant grief and disappointment he has ever known, it has also led to the ennobling and purifying of his character. Therefore you have nothing to regret. He is one of the men who are born to be unhappy. But there is a higher and a lower condition of unhappiness. You have opened the valve of sympathy with the suffering of others; that is more healthy than inhaling over and over again the vitiated atmosphere of personal misery.

"And now I come to a far sadder episode.

"I had planned a party of literary friends to meet a few days since, and not having seen Mr. Saul Barham since you were here, I wrote to ask him to Brackly. I did not have an answer for several posts, when a letter came from his mother, whom I did not know, at Fellbridge, saying, 'My son begs me to write to you. He is here with us, very sick, and quite unable to write. He was seized with hemorrhage of the lungs, while passing Sunday with us, a fortnight ago, since when he has not left his bed. He has had two subsequent attacks, and grows weaker daily. I have lost all hope. Knowing what a kind friend you have been to my dear son, I take the liberty of asking if you would come and see him. I think it would be the greatest consolation to him to see you—to see any friend who would communicate with dear Miss Ballinger—before

he is taken. Do you know where she is? He talks of her all the time. Even when he is asleep, I can sometimes catch her name upon his lips. You will forgive me, a stranger, for writing like this to you, dear madam, and if you can come here for an hour I shall thank you from the bottom of my heart.'

"The simplicity and yet reticence of the heart-stricken mother's letter touched me greatly. You can imagine I did not hesitate an instant, but wired to say I would be at Fellbridge the same afternoon.

"That visit was the saddest hour I ever remember, outside the personal troubles I have had in life. The extreme quietude of everything in that little home, from the sternly-sad, self-contained father downwards, affected me far more than any noisy demonstrations of grief would have done. As to the wan, gentle creature who met me at the door, I could only think of Shakespeare's line, 'Dry sorrow drinks our blood.' Her agony was far too deep for tears. When I was admitted to the poor young man's room, I saw at once that he had not many days to live. But the light flickered up in those wonderful eyes of his, as he held out his hand and thanked me for coming. His first question was for you. Where were you? Had I heard from you lately? I could tell him nothing, except that I believed you to be still in California. Then he asked me to transmit a message to you whenever I could do so. 'Tell her,' he said, 'that the happiest hours of my life I owe to her. Little mother will not mind my saying that. She knows that the first and only love of my manhood was for that noble Englishwoman. If she had returned my love I should have struggled—fought for life. Perhaps I should have won. As it is, I am glad to go If it

were not for little mother I should not have a regret. But her love is so unselfish. She has seen my suffering. She has borne my irritability. She knows I shall be happier at rest.'

"I sat with him for some time, his mother beside me, Mr. Barham standing at the foot of the bed. I thought it must wound him that Saul never once alluded to his father —appeared to think that *he* would never feel his son's death. Was this the result of a principle of life-long suppression on the minister's part? Could it be that I, the stranger, surmised better the intensity of the elder man's feelings than did his dying boy? I know not; I can only say what struck me.

"After a while I saw that he was exhausted. Talking made him cough, and there was a thin red streak on the handkerchief he held to his mouth. 'Would you object to joining us in prayer by my son's side?' Mr. Barham then said, in a perfectly unemotional voice. It was the first time he had broken silence since entering the room. I instantly knelt down, and, taking Saul's hand in mine, bowed my head, while the minister with great solemnity repeated that fine prayer from 'The Visitation of the Sick,' beginning 'Oh, Father of mercies, and God of all comfort.'

"When he had finished, there was silence for a minute or two. I looked up and saw the poor mother's tearless eyes fixed upon her son's. I stooped, as I rose from my knees, and kissed him on the forehead. 'Good-by,' I whispered. 'Good-by, for a little while. I shall bear your love to her, and tell her you are gone to await her coming in that glad place where we all hope to meet.' His beautiful eyes alone answered me; his lips moved, but I

could not hear what they murmured. And so, afraid of breaking down, I turned and hurried from the room.

"On receiving your letter, I wrote at once to Mrs. Barham. The answer came in a telegram to-day, which I recognize as the minister's wording,

"'*Saul departed this life at daybreak.*'

"So the aching heart and troubled spirit are at rest; and until death summons the poor father and mother to rejoin their beloved son, they must wander wearily on, bereft of the pride and joy of their life!

"I will not ask your forgiveness for writing at such length. Though knowing the young man comparatively little, my heart has been deeply stirred. Yours, with much greater reason, cannot fail to be so.

"I am, dear Miss Ballinger,

"Yours most cordially,

"ANNE COURTLY."

This letter affected Grace Ballinger deeply. It was placed in her hand, with a packet of others, as she stepped on board the *Majestic*, on her homeward passage, and she read it as they steamed down the bay. Lawrence found her looking very sorrowful, her eyes fixed on the same shores she remembered watching with Saul, in the fog, as they stood on deck together that January morning less than five months ago.

"Something has troubled you, dear," he said, in a low voice, as he put his hand upon hers. "What is it?"

"It is Life," she answered, presently. "Life,

and his brother, Death. Read that." She gave him the letter. "I have told you about him. I have told you about both those men. I knew them both but such a short time, yet each interested me deeply; and over each—I cannot understand how or why—I exercised some strange influence. And now it is all over. The book is closed. Poor Saul Barham, with his brilliant gifts and high aspirations, is dead. Quintin Ferrars I am never likely to see again. Perhaps it is better I should not. But of all the memories of America I bear away with me, the most pathetic is that of the minister's small household in New England, as I knew it, with this only son, their idol, now lying in the dust. Can religion like Mr. Barham's bring consolation? I hope so. But that poor mother! I think I will return to America some day, if it be only to see her!"

Nearly a year has passed since then. Between Clare Planter and her English admirer things remain, to all outward seeming, very much as they were. Newport did not produce the results so confidently looked for by her father, nor has New York done so during the past winter. A constant battledore and shuttlecock of letters—the punctuality of the interchange being broken only once or twice, when Mordaunt Ballinger had forgotten to post his letter in time to catch the American

mail, never by the young lady's own negligence—has led Mrs. Ivor Lawrence to assure her aunt that she must make up her mind to the inevitable result of the Planters' approaching arrival in England. She pretends that the American girl's liking for her brother, having clearly resisted the effect of separation and the onslaughts of other admirers, has developed into a far stronger affection than existed a year ago. She even declares that she perceives in some of the letters Mordaunt has shown her a covert dread on Clare's part of his constancy being put to too severe a test. But who can tell? This view of the case may be only that of a devoted sister, and Mordaunt's hopes may be dissipated, on the arrival of the Planters in London, "like the baseless fabric of a vision."

THE END

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